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Cathedrals and Cloisters of the South of France

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Albi.

"'One could pass whole hours in contemplating this lovely detail,' writes Prosper Merimée."



CATHEDRALS *and* CLOISTERS

OF THE

SOUTH OF FRANCE

BY

ELISE WHITLOCK ROSE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS

BY

VIDA HUNT FRANCIS

IN TWO VOLUMES

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Languedoc.

(*Continued.*)

II.

CATHEDRALS OF THE TOWNS.

Mende.

Near the greater cities of Languedoc and usually further inland lie the cathedral-towns and villages, isolated and small and devoid of any appearance of episcopal dignity. Railroads pass them by with few trains, their interests seem rural, and their main streets are often only dusty continuations of country roads. Yet each was a mediæval city of great activity; the home of a noble, protected by his castle, or a town whose strong walls were manned by a thousand soldiers, and became the refuge of the country folk when marauders or the armed bands of rival lords swooped down to burn their cottages and devastate their little fields. The strong walls are now destroyed, the power of the great families long gone, and deserted by the rush of modern travel and all that makes for modern importance, these old cities nestle among the hills and mountains of the Cévennes—sometimes towns of size, sometimes pleasant villages, and sometimes scarcely more than peaceful, forgotten hamlets. Their Cathedrals are seldom as entirely beautiful as those of the cities, but the most modest has its beauty of detail, a tower, a Cloister, or a bit of carving; and the town itself will charm the traveller by a quaint, hilly street, a little river with old, old bridges, or a picturesque site.

During the V century "the tomb of a martyr became the cradle" of one of these little cities, and in the province of Gévaudan the old Roman town of Grèzes became the capital of the County, and the new city, Mende, the seat of the episcopal power. At first the prelates bore the title of "Bishops of the Gabales," the primitive name of the people of the country, but in 951 a certain Stephen I had dropped the name and adopted that of his city. It would seem that even at this early time the Bishops had been able to absorb at least part of the temporal power. Families become extinct and are subject to all the vagaries of heredity; but those who serve the Church's interests are picked men, and in her wise economy a prelate is invariably prepared to succeed a prelate. When Kings of Aragon inherited the Viscounty of Gévaudan they acknowledged the Bishops of Mende as temporal suzerains. This precarious honour so alarmed Adalbert, the prudent incumbent of the See, that he hastened to Paris and placed himself under the protection of Louis VII; and when he had obtained the famous Golden Bull, the first and chief document of the Mendais Bishops' temporal power, Adalbert the Venerable returned to his city and built her walls.

A hundred years later, when the King of Aragon ceded many privileges and domains to the King of France, Louis IX became Viscount of Grèzes, and the political supremacy of the prelates was seriously endangered. It was obvious that a King of France, however saintly, could not do homage to a vassal were he ten times a priest; and the Bishop, in return for a few more of this world's goods, was obliged to



"A BIG, PLEASANT TOWN, OVERTOPPED BY TALL SPIRES."—MENDE.

cede his suzerain rights. Wise with the history of the Church's long experience, his successors bided their time to come into their own again; and scarcely fifty years later Philip the Fair, that man of troubles and intrigues, divided with them his temporal power in the province and confirmed their title of Count. This decree was enforced with more or less of thoroughness until the Revolution; and even when the States-General of Languedoc were formed, and Gévaudan sent deputies, she still convoked her own provincial councils, and he who presided over them was the Count in fact, and not only in name, my Lord the Bishop, and not my Lord the King.



"A NATIVE OF MENDE," URBAN V.

In the XIV century a native of this province, William of Grimoard, an Abbot of the Church, ascended the throne of Saint Peter, and crowned at Avignon as Urban V, became one of the famous Popes of the Babylonian Captivity. With many more striking and original qualities, this Frenchman had the ineradicable love of home and of country which still distinguishes his countrymen throughout the

world. Finding that the Bishopric of his native province was vacant, Urban took pleasure in adding to his superb rank this very minor title, and in ruling Mende with paternal care through a direct intermediary who was entitled the Grand Vicar. During this strange reign twelve scholarships were established at Montpellier for the students of the diocese of Mende, several village churches were built with moneys from the treasury of the Bishop-Pope, and in 1369 Urban began his greatest gift to the episcopate, the new Cathedral. And in spite of plagues, famine, the ravages of foraging bands and of armies, and disputes between the Bishops and the inhabitants of the capital, the building of the church was carried on successfully during the XIV and XV centuries.

At the beginning of the XVI century many Italians held Sees in France, apparently for the mere pleasure of enjoying their revenues, and Francesco della Rovera was the incumbent of the See of Mende. But this prelate departed from the habits of his ecclesiastical compatriots and spent largely for the honour of his church. In 1508 he began the construction of the Cathedral's spires; and in 1512 he had the pleasure of seeing the building, the work of over a hundred and fifty years, wholly complete.

Few succeeding Bishops enjoyed the sight. For the Reformation had made rapid strides in the south country, and in 1563 Théodore de Bèze brought the force of Calvin's logic against the power of the Catholic Church and the Baron of Alais added the persuasion of the Protestant arms. After him came the terrible Merle, Captain of the "cruel war," who was for eight years the scourge of the land. After



"FINE TAPESTRIES HANG ON THE CHOIR-WALLS."—MENDE.

scores of minor raids and massacres, Merle decided to take advantage of the terrible desolation which the plague had wrought in Mende and give a striking example of the prowess of his Faith. In 1579, during the darkness of Christmas night, he scaled the walls, followed by five hundred of his men-at-arms. For days they enjoyed the savage pleasure of slaughter, pillage, and fire, and the pale sun of New Year's Day rose on a city of ruins and tears. The living mourned the dead among the desolation of their homes. The great bells of the Cathedral, given by Urban, whose "Non-Pareille" was the most beautiful in Christendom, had been broken and carried away as cannon-metal, and there was no tolling for the season ushered in nor for the lives that had gone out. The church itself had been sacked and burned, and between its towers and its apse only a few chapels and bits of walls stood, desolate, among the ashes and the stones.

In 1680, though poorly restored, it was re-consecrated with solemn joy and ceremonies, but it did not regain its former character until the extensive re-building of our own day.

Buried among the hills, Mende is now a big, pleasant town, overtopped by her tall spires. One, which is taller than its neighbour, is thick and firm; the other, more perfect, is nearly three hundred feet high and has much elegance of detail. The Cathedral's apses and its side-walls have little beauty; their flying-buttresses and large expanses of stone support are of a practical conception, and the portals seem to have been built with more idea of their use than of their beauty. The interior of Saint-Pierre has a usual Gothic plan of three naves and side chapels, a choir, and an ambulatory

with radiating chapels. Fine tapestries hang on the choir-walls and add warmth to an interior which, as a whole, has no beauty of elaboration or of architectural ornament. Size, height, and simplicity give it dignity; and with its absence of triforium, its clerestory of severe-lined windows, its angularity of arch, and unbroken line of columns, it would be too bare, if in the proportion of all these details there were not a certain beauty of severity that is majestic in its whole effect.

This austere beauty of the interior and the fine spires are the glories of the Cathedral, and, although it is not one of the greater Gothic Cathedrals, Saint-Pierre has an impressiveness which is not always found in the lesser Gothic works, and both in itself and its history it is one of the interesting churches of the Midi.

Alais.

As "stars differ from each other in magnitude and glory," so do the Cathedrals of France, and a few—happily a very few—are utterly unworthy of the honour their title bestows. Under this condemnation, historically and architecturally, lies Alais; and the more enthusiastic the traveller, the greater his disappointment when he stands before its façade and contemplates the dreamy mixture of styles, in which that of the XVIII century is triumphantly dominant.

The architectural virtues of the XVIII century would seem to have been few. There was a talent for pleasing, conventionalised landscaping, and a city such as Montpellier must thank the builders of that day for its finest squares and



"THE BEAUTY OF SEVERITY."—MENDE.

promenades; but in general building they were stultified by this conventionality, and in the particular phase of church construction, their insufficiency is deplorable. The cult of classicism, which had introduced the Renaissance, led these men to a study of styles of architecture foreign to Christian traditions; and filled with admiration for all that was "ancient," they scorned the great Christian architecture of the Middle Ages and affected a paganism which they had the bad taste to introduce into Cathedral building. Their talent was of a very timid and imitative nature, and as they would seem to have had small reverence and little sense of "the eternal fitness" of things ecclesiastical, the atmosphere of the churches themselves are "huge," "vast," "imposing," —meaningless, unbeautiful structures which these showy adjectives best describe.

In 1694, when these travesties of architecture were seriously admired, Alais was created a Bishopric; and its Cathedral, built about the meagre remains of a XII century church, is unworthy of mention among the greater "Cathedrals of the South."

Lodève. The long white road, under its arches of plane-trees and acacias, wound around the foot-hills of the Cévennes. On either hand were signs of agricultural thrift and prosperity, field after field of wine-giving vines shadowed by grey olive-trees that grew luxuriantly in the rich, red soil. Even the hill-tops were gay with heather and broom, and masses of red and yellow poppies lifted their little heads toward the glowing morning

sun of the Midi. The traveller, filled with "great expectations," drove eagerly into Lodève,—to find a city whose newer section was distinguished by the chimneys of modern factories and whose older part was not less disappointing. Crossing a little bridge, he saw decayed and ancient houses of stone, from whose windows busy house-wives were throwing refuse of all sorts into the river beneath; and as he advanced further into the city, he found narrow streets piled with the débris of those who lived too far from the accommodating river.

The broad Boulevard de la Liberté and the expansive Avenue de la République were not less mournful in their vacuousness than the alley-ways in their dirt; and even the sunshine and the low green mountains massed about the town did not take from it the haunting appearance of a dirty, comfortless old age.

Lodève has few suggestions of the past when she was a great episcopal city whose prelates haughtily arrogated to themselves the right of coinage. The Bishop's Palace is now a large, bare barrack; and under the gate which bears the defaced ecclesiastical escutcheon the common soldier of France passes in and out, instead of the seminarist and the priest. In any other less dreary surroundings the Cathedral, unfinished, even unformed, would seem only another southern attempt at Gothic—only another southern failure. Unlike Narbonne where the Gothic is inspiring, or Toulouse where it has much dignity, the unfinished state of the Cathedral of Lodève arouses no feeling of real regret, but rather that mild and philosophic dissatisfaction which uninteresting incom-

pletion invariably causes. For it is not a great church nor even a fine one, except in those inherent characteristics of height and strength which give to early Gothic a modicum, at least, of solemn dignity. When the traveller entered Saint-Fulcran's, an early Mass was ending, and, as was his custom, he sat himself comfortably in the back of the church.



THE CATHEDRAL.— LODÈVE.

The worshippers—dear, old, becapped ladies and younger, busier women—passed quietly out; and he had just settled himself to pleasurable architectural contemplation when an opaque object came—and stayed—before him. He woke to the fact that it was a person, an official, the Sacristan.

"My friend," he ventured respectfully, "if one mentioned that you obstructed the view?"

"So much the better, Monsieur, so much the better." And Monsieur still contemplated the bent shoulders and narrow back of the great man.

"So much the better!" echoed the astonished traveller.

"And Monsieur's camera?" The Sacristan turned and showed a sour, cross-eyed visage.

"You have so many visitors and cameras then?"

"Visitors? No, indeed, Monsieur, but"—the voice became sinister—"there are cameras here, here in this very town, cameras who would like to take my Cathedral—but I—I am here, I, the Sacristan, and I do not permit it."

"But if one has permission from the Minister of the Interior?"

"In that case, Monsieur, the permission!" The Sacristan gazed at it spitefully, shrugged his old shoulders again, and went on.

The first impression of the interior is that of height, a height whose dignity is diminished by the shortened, unfinished nave, but which has a compensating accentuation in the seven long and slender windows of the choir. The next impression, swiftly following, of a bare, spacious room, is caused by the curious disposition of the choir. In itself it is so small and shallow that the last two bays of the central nave are walled up and used for the Canons' stalls. In this manner a liturgical choir is formed as large as the body of the Cathedral itself, which has a central nave of but the three remaining bays, with side aisles and chapels. The columns are applied, and apart from this simple decorative quality

and the particular details of the chapels, the interior is so plain that it approaches severe simplicity. There is no ambulatory; each of the lateral naves ends in a chapel; and from that of Saint Joseph, low-vaulted and lately restored, a little door leads to the Cloister.



"ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE CLOISTER."—LODÈVE.

It is now scarcely recognisable,—a tiny, sordid court-yard; worn old pillars supporting one side of a vaulted walk, a little vestibule leading to the street, these are all that remain of the Cloister of Lodève. Only a dreamer, sitting there at dusk or when the moon casts the tower's shadow across the dusty close, could picture it as the "quiet place," the refuge, of the Cathedral's priests.

The church proper has two doors but no beautiful portal; its west wall touches the barracks, and only the apse stands free and strong. Far down each of its buttresses is the curious line of an arch, perhaps an early and tentative form of flying-buttress found to be structurally defective. This arch-line, the only suggestion of any lightness of form, is now surrounded, filled, and made into a perfectly solid construction. The whole church is heavily, plainly buttressed, unornamented, and seemingly decaying. High above it and stanchly dominating the entire city, is the Cathedral's one strong, square tower; and its bells ring daily to remind the devout of the country around of the holy place, the Cathedral, the shrine of its patron-Bishop, Saint Fulcran.



"THE SHRINE OF ITS PATRON BISHOP."—LODÈVE.

Lavaur.

"So strong a city was Lavaur that never in any kingdom was one seen with higher ramparts nor deeper moats." So thought Almaric de Montréal when in 1211 he advised his sister, the widow of the Lord of Lavaur, to hold out against the forces of the Albigensian "Crusaders." But the "high ramparts" fell, for it was Simon de Montfort who stood before the gates; and the great Scourge of the Midi entered with his train of nobles and men-at-arms, of priests and monks. Reverend Bishops not infrequently cheered his army to battle, and the bare-footed, brown-frocked Dominic de Guzman encouraged the soldiers to slaughter by promising eternal bliss to those who were most valiant against the heretics. The atrocities of Béziers were repeated at Lavaur; and as a fitting climax, the Lady of the City and her daughter, by order of Simon himself, were thrown alive into a deep well to the cry of "Dios lo vult." Two years later a Council of the Church was held in the desolate Albigensian stronghold, and noted men of southern history again trod her streets. Raymond, Count of Toulouse, and Peter of Aragon, his ally, came to justify themselves. The haughty ecclesiastics, representatives of the Pope, and great nobles of both sides rode down her streets in gorgeous raiment; but in spite of all, Lavaur lay mourning in her ashes till 1318 when Pope John XXII created her Bishopric.

The fortunes of war, like the rain from heaven, fall on the just and unjust; and one of the unforeseen effects of the Holy Siege of heretical Lavaur was the destruction of its Catholic Church. The re-construction began forty years later, and the

most important parts of the new building were finished before 1500. After that period there were but few additions, and the Cathedral of Lavaur is therefore of much the same general period as that of Albi. With many differences they have a certain general resemblance. Saint-Alain is immeasurably inferior to Sainte-Cécile, but both are of the same soft-toned Toulousan brick, both have a fortress strength, and both have a single room as nave. Although it has not the strange, imposing glory of Albi, the church of Lavaur is more impressive than any other brick Cathedral of the Midi; and a few days spent in its study is a very pleasant and logical preparation for the many hours of loving, thoughtful study which the meditative traveller will spend about the great Cathedral on the Tarn.

The interior of Saint-Alain is a large dark room. Shallow chapels which open from it like alcoves seem lost in the general shadows, and in spite of many windows and even a third tier of diamond-shaped openings high in the vaulting, the church never loses its atmosphere of sombre solitude and mystery, After the fashion dear to the South the interior is completely covered with paint; but instead of being conventionally patterned as is customary in the Midi, the decoration is after the unfortunate style so common in Italy, and happily so rare in France, of simulated sculpture and painted architecture. Over each arch the simulacra of two huge Saints stand under supposititious canopies in imaginary niches. Over the altar there is a false arcade, very like the real balconies of the tower, and in it life-sized figures seem to stand in ghostly array. There is no excuse and no palliation for

so mean a sham, but in this rare instance it is less annoying because the colour-scheme of greys and browns is un-



"THE DECORATION IS OF SIMULATED SCULPTURE AND PAINTED ARCHITECTURE."—LAVAUR.

wontedly subdued and has not that garish mockery found in so many of the Italian churches. The interior is plain, simple, heavy in construction; and as is usual in the Gothic

forms of the South, devoid of architectural elegance. It relies for its undoubted effect and power on qualities far removed from artifice,—on impressive loneliness, on height that is sheer, on its darkness, and on the sobriety of its polychrome. Peering in the dimness at modern Stations of the Cross that have unusually true religious feeling, after a glance at a realistic painting of naked souls agonising in reddest flames of Purgatory, after a few long minutes before the white figure of Ribera's Crucified Christ, so tragic in its gloomy Spanish background, one goes outside; and before the door has swung back again, the traveller sees the sturdy outer walls of the old Cathedral, warm and ruddy in the southern sun.

The one entrance to the church is through a small insignificant portal on the south side. The south wall itself is too old and irregular for either effect or beauty, and its most curious part is a little tower in whose topmost part a jack o' the clock has stood since the XVI century and struck, more or less faithfully, the passing of the hours. Near the portal is another bit of religious art more interesting than beautiful, a modern statue of Mary Immaculate "who miraculously saved us from the plague—in the XIV century, and, two hundred years later, from the religionists." Erected after a mission under the fostering care of the Dominican Fathers, it is not only a tribute to their heavenly Protectress, but a reminder that Lavaur profited by her Albigensian experiences and held stoutly for the League and the Church. It is also an unconsciously subtle hint of the changes time has wrought and of the changelessness of the Church. Dominic

de Guzman, founder of the Order, lacerated himself and tortured heretics with fine impartiality for the good of souls. His fiery will ruled unchecked. His followers in the XIX century, unable to inflict physical punishment on spiritual offenders or to consign them to the rack or faggot-pile, still say in their hearts "God wills it," hand them over to the distrust and contempt of mankind, and endeavour to accomplish psychologically what formerly was gained by more brutal means.

Unfortunately Lavaur has not yet awakened to the importance of her church, and the fine, heavy façade-tower is so surrounded by quaint old houses and staring blank walls that it is seen with difficulty. The result, however, repays the effort; for although it suffers in the inevitable comparison with Albi, it is Lavaur's most beautiful detail. And indeed it is very beautiful in its heavy grace. The high bases are flanked by buttresses, stout and square, and, after the fashion of its kind, surmounted by three stories of slender balconies. In the tower's face, at a judicious height, is a large and magnificent rose which, like some of the enlarged round-headed windows of the chapels, has beautiful early Gothic traceries in stone. Below it, in another flank of the wall, large portals were planned, but money or self-sacrificing ambition was lacking and the Bishop allowed the two doorways, which would have given to the Cathedral a truly noble entrance, to be walled up. The arches remain to show what should have been, and the yellowed white of their stone, which is that of the rose and of the three upper balconies, harmonises deliciously with the dull pink brick and adds a gentle

charm of colour to the symmetry of line which these old Toulousan towers never lack.



"THE HEAVY FAÇADE TOWER WHICH IS LAVAUR'S MOST BEAUTIFUL DETAIL."—LAVAUR.

Leaving the church, the traveller wandered into the public garden, the site of the former episcopal Palace. Nothing

suggests its past importance. A statue of Las Cases holding the Memorial of Saint Helena stands in prominence, shrubs and trees grow luxuriantly, and kind, leisurely French fathers



"A VIEW OF THE CATHEDRAL."—LAVAUR.

and well-dressed mothers take the afternoon air and follow little toddlers about the few winding paths. From the edge of the garden, safely balustraded, the traveller looked out on the view which formerly delighted prelates' eyes—low,

rolling hills, here and there a homely château, with peaked towers rising high like the tall, pointed caps of mediæval women-kind, fields for grazing and fields of rich grain, with plenty and peace on every side. A bridge led across the river into this beguiling country and the traveller, yielding to temptation, crossed it, and from the other bank discovered a view of the whole Cathedral so picturesque that he gave up his walk, and resting in the shade of a great tree, gazed in quiet enjoyment. On a low bluff above the swift, noisy little Agout, it looms,—first the stolid, heavy apse, stretching back from this the walls, and then the tower. Enjoying the sight of this old church, he laughed for the pleasure he was having in this sturdy Cathedral, finer and truer than many a more famous one in larger cities, and he laughed again as he thought of the crowds who travel weary miles to see the rococo Cathedrals of Italy and will never know old Lavaur.

At length he started "home-ward" and walked along the new boulevards that follow the lines of the demolished ramparts. To people who know only the boulevards of Paris, those of Lavaur would be a revelation. In the day-time a passing foot-step or a country cart is the only sound which falls on the ear. On fine evenings there is often the music of the town's band, the pleasure of whole families who come out for "a little promenade." An ambulant theatrical company sometimes pitches its tent at one end of this great French boulevard; sometimes a no less enterprising entertainer unloads from his wagon the fierce lions and tigers of a merry-go-round. This fine broad street also makes a

convenient fair-ground or sheep-market, and the whole gamut of provincial pleasures and profits may be run in traversing its length. Lavaur is a quiet town, very typical of many others in the rich south country. Its diversions are few, its walls and towers crumbled, its history forgotten by its people,—but among them may be studied the principles of that recuperative force which has saved France from many of the results of its disastrous wars. And the Cathedral remains, not only a really fine old building, but an admirable example and a fitting introduction to the brick manner of the Midi.

Pamiers. To the student of ecclesiastical history the name of Pamiers stands out in clear relief among the minor episcopal Sees of Languedoc from the singular fact that twice its Bishops—nearly four centuries intervening—precipitated, if they did not originate, a conflict between papal and royal power. "These struggles were marked," says Baillet, "by the singular coincidence that in each case one king saw their conclusion while three Pontiffs were involved on the other side. The prerogatives of the crown had to do with both struggles, and appeals were made to a future Council, ambassadors were excommunicated, their masters threatened," and the result left enduring marks on the Gallican Church for centuries.

In 1300, intoxicated with pride by the overwhelming success of the first Jubilee, Boniface VIII, in despite of Philip the Fair, created the new Bishopric of Pamiers, which he cut

out of the diocese of Toulouse, and appointed to it his devoted adherent, Bernard de Saisset, Abbot of Saint-Antonin near Pamiers. De Saisset, characterised as "a violent and ambitious man," was not only a descendant of the ancient Viscounts of Toulouse but the friend of all the distinguished men and municipal nobility of that great city. His dream, then not an impossibility, was the foundation of a Kingdom of Languedoc with the Count of Foix or the Count of Comminges at its head. But these great lords of the South had neither the patriotism nor the courage demanded by the opportunity. When he heard the bold proposal, de Comminges crossed himself and swore "This Saisset is a devil." The Count of Foix meanly betrayed his friend to the Bishop of Toulouse, "a Frenchman who was hated," wrote Dupuy, "because he was of a tongue which of ancient date is hostile to our tongue." This prelate whose power had been curtailed by the elevation of the Southerner did not fail to inform Philip the Fair of these treasonable proceedings; and the King, outraged in his vanity and his power, seized de Saisset and sent word to the Sovereign Pontiff "not," says Michelet, "to exonerate himself for having violated the privileges of the Church but to require the Bishop's degradation before he had him executed." The Pope instantly claimed his Bishop, and published the famous Bull in which he calls upon Philip to "hearken to the counsels of a tender father." These "counsels" were given added weight by another papal emanation, "Salvator Mundi," in which the French King's especial privilege, exemption from excommunication, was suspended. The King, by no means cowed, forbade

any gold or silver to be taken from the kingdom, which he knew would be a severe blow to Rome. He forbade any prelate to leave France; and to excite the sympathy of his subjects, had a false Bull drawn up in most offensive terms and a reply which he never sent, "Philip, by the Grace of God King of the French, to Boniface who gives himself out for Pope, little or no greeting. Let thy very great silliness know that we are subject to no one in temporal matters . . . and that we hold all who think differently fools or madmen." With these disgraceful words, which doubtless reached the ears of the Pope, the war between King and Holy See was on, and Gallicanism was born. And here disappears the bold Bishop of Pamiers whose haughty words had done so much to fan the flame of this dissension. Philip refused to release his prisoner and confided him to the care of the Archbishop of Narbonne. And history records nothing of his seclusion or his death.

It is not a little singular that in the reign of Louis XIV, some four hundred years later, a crisis was again reached in the long smouldering struggle between the spiritual and temporal power, but this time in regard to the "régale," or King's right, which had never been accepted by Languedoc, Guienne, or Provence. It is again a Bishop of Pamiers with Monseigneur Pavillon of Alet, both Jansenists, who after remonstrances, excommunicated unsuitable crown nominees. In this instance, the Metropolitan cancelled their sentences, the Pope annulled the Metropolitan's decision, and Louis, keenly resentful, called the French Bishops together to establish his position. This Assembly, of which Bossuet was

the head, obedient to the royal behest with which many of them secretly sympathised, formulated the famous Four Articles of the Gallican Liberties, which Louis himself retracted in his later, more docile days. And thus from the small diocese of Pamiers has twice come the tiny flame which kindled the fires of great religious dissensions within the Church and involved two Kings and six Popes in serious conflict.

From the city of Pamiers a little, badly-built road winds under shady trees along the banks of the Ariège and suddenly stops at a small, unpretentious group of farm buildings. There is a little open wood-shed, a bit of ruined wall standing alone, a small dwelling-house, and largest of all, a barn. Here was the monastery of Saint-Antonin of Pamiers, the home of that Abbot who called Simon de Montfort and his cruelties into the County of Foix; here, too, was the residence of the great Abbot Bernard de Saisset who was created the first Bishop of Pamiers; and here was his Abbey-church—to-day, a barn. Roosters and broods of chickens run in and out of its low door and above it a vine trails across the worn statue of Saint-Antonin. "Ora pro nobis" is still faintly traced above the niche, but present-day pilgrims have forgotten this ancient shrine, and the scene of the Saint's martyrdom is now merely a place of homely labour.

Three small apses and a little turret without a bell complete the remains of the Abbey's exterior. It was never a large church, but how much more powerfully sweet must the incense have been to holy worshippers, and how much more powerful to the nostrils of the traveller were the odours of



"AN UNPRETENTIOUS GROUP OF FARM BUILDINGS."—PAMIERS.

the barn-yard which greeted his entrance. Fowls fluttered away, oxen moved in stalls made in the side apses, and a black cat sitting on the improvised steps that led to a granary above the nave meditatively washed his face. Far back in the recess of the central apse, the neglected table of the High



"A VINE TRAILS ACROSS THE WORN STATUE OF SAINT ANTONIN."—PAMIERS.

Altar stood—broken and dusty. There were still traces of simple carvings and of rude frescoes, but the material has replaced the spiritual so completely that even the heretical enemies of the Abbot of Saint-Antonin would be satisfied could they contemplate the fate of his church.

Walking back toward the city along the banks of the little Ariège, the traveller saw ever before his eyes the tower of

the present Cathedral of Saint-Antonin. Sometimes only its high balustrade rose out of the thick cluster of trees; sometimes above a mass of swaying green a story or two of narrow



"THE BEAUTY OF EPISCOPAL PAMIERS IS IN THE TOWER."— PAMIERS.

Gothic windows appeared. Crossing the bridge he climbed the little hill of the Castelas, and from the park at the summit he looked over the plain toward the great Pyrenees, down on the city and its ugly, busy factory chimneys, and in the square beneath he saw the Cathedral.

This red-brick church, so strong and so Catholic, is strangely reminiscent of the miseries of religious strife, of inquisitional horrors which were fully repaid in the square below, in 1577, when a mob of exasperated Huguenots madly sacked and destroyed the church and left the tower alone standing above the ruins.

A hundred years later Mansart re-built the Cathedral. But its hopeless mediocrity serves only to recall the former greater building, and to keep in everlasting remembrance the days of fierce unholy wars and of the first Cathedral's downfall.

The beauty of episcopal Pamiers is neither within nor without its heavy walls, but in the tower which for many feet rises sheer above the square. It first ends in crenellations; and here, as if he knew himself safe from warring crowds beneath, the builder stopped his massive defences and paused —rested—and let his fancy play. He became careless of too solid strength, and prodigal of grace and beauty. Building again, his higher tower is hexagonal; with three stories of double Gothic windows, slender and tall. Above them a few huge gargoyles fly outward, and the tower ends in an ornate balustrading. This brick tower of two conceptions is the Cathedral's only heritage of the XIV century and its only real beauty. And therefore, architecturally speaking, a half hour's contemplation from the summit of the Castelas is worth many hours of study within its doors.

Albi.

A small and quiet city of the Tarn, where Mediævalism is slowly giving place to the banalities of modern French "comfort," gave its name to one of the most celebrated sects that ever seceded from the Catholic Church. Yet the citizens of that town, wise beyond their generation, seem to have been possessed of the mild spirit of a fair-minded criticism which was repugnant to every traditional sentiment of the dissenting sect, for when the papal Legate came to reason with them, sundry persons riding on asses went to meet him outside the city and heralded his approach by the beating of drums and other instruments capable of producing disrespectful discords. But to Saint Bernard, who followed him, they paid reverent heed, and the holy man converted many from the heresy which they had learned from a certain Henry, an apostate monk.

If Albi cannot be considered either the source or the hotbed of the Albigensian heresy, that form of dissidence was none the less native to the surrounding country; and so terrible was the effect of its clash with Catholic orthodoxy that no phase of southern life escaped its influence. It included many strange sects. To a purity of living which was acknowledged even by Catholic writers of the time the Albigenses united an intolerance no less intense than that of their persecutors, a Faith that endured to death, and the most fantastic eccentricities of doctrine. Their practical goodness and their holiness have led Protestants to claim too enthusiastically as "brethren" those from whose extravagances of Biblical interpretation they would be the first to dissent.

Because of the absence of any theological exposition by the Albigensians themselves, or by their sympathisers, it is difficult to state their doctrine with clearness. But by searching the testimony which they gave before the Inquisition, preserved in the records of the Holy Office at Carcassonne, eliminating the grosser accusations of their enemies, and relying on the more moderate and logical statements which have as it were some inter-agreement and some semblance of reasonableness, a few exact ideas may be gleaned of their singular tenets. Each theological system commences with its particular definition of God, and it was in this very basis of their belief that the Albigensians differed from the vast majority of the Christian world. To them there was a God of Good, revealed in the New Testament, and a God of Evil, demonstrated in the Old, whose differences and antagonisms and dual existence were clearly and divinely revealed in these books. Like all occidentals, unaccustomed to the highly-wrought symbolism of the oriental mind, they, not unfairly, but naïvely and literally, illustrated and proved their doctrines by texts from the Bible. The God of the Old Testament creates a man and a woman, and makes possible and even encourages marriage which the God of the New Testament condemns. For "the children of this world marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage," and "there is neither male nor female, but ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Jehovah puts "enmity" between those he has created; many times He "curses," and doing evil, He

"repents" of what He has done. The Divinity of the New Dispensation, on the contrary, "blesses" and is "the Author of every good and perfect gift."

In a leather bag under their long cloak, the perfect Cathari carried always the source of their doctrine, that which attested its truth, the New Testament. Thus armed, they wandered over all the country; and in an age when an anachronism was unrecognised, when comparative psychology was unknown, when even so great a person as de Montfort—so well trained in fanaticism, so strict in morals, so firm in Faith—was unable to read, they gained many followers who were convinced by the apparent conclusiveness of their logic. Austere in example, plainly clothed in black, simple in manners, they were the more impressive in comparison with the Catholic clergy of the times; the influence of their reasoning was strengthened by their personal asceticism, and they were called "the good people," "Cathari," "the pure."

If the city of Albi was not a stronghold of this sect, so generally called by its name, it was at least a distinguished example of the evil practices within the Church which contributed so largely to heretical disaffection. In 843, the time of Charles the Bald, the Bishop of Albi possessed no lands nor rights of justice. His See was no more than a fief, and as a dependency was at the disposition of a lay overlord. Such a confusion of the worldly and the ecclesiastical power led inevitably to administrative disorder. In 1037, we read that "the city, the money,"—probably the mint,—"the market, and the Bishopric" were presented to a woman,

Majore, by her husband, the suzerain Count of Toulouse. Thirty years later the Gallia Christiana relates that a certain Bishop Frotard paid fifteen valuable horses for the See. At another period and during the actual tenure of a prelate, Æmelius, it was sold to a lord whose son Guillem proposed to enter holy orders for the sole purpose of occupying Albi or of granting the privilege to another as his fancy dictated, "ut intusse fecerit aut alium episcopum fecerit benedicere." In either case the young Guillem was to receive the episcopal revenues, and if he died "antequam sit benedictus ad episcopum," it was arranged that his brother Peter should succeed to the privilege of living on Holy Church. In this blasphemous manner ecclesiastical dignities were disgraced by unfit and unworthy occupants, sons of the nobility wore the biretta jauntily rather than reverently and were bitterly and justly attacked in many a Troubadour's sirvente. "They pass the whole year," sang one, "in luxurious living, buying good fish, very white bread, and the most delicious of wines." "Instead of feeding their flock," mocked another, "they think only of fleecing them," and "far from endeavouring to instruct, they set the example of every vice."

The papal power at this time was untiring in its efforts to remedy these glaring abuses, to put an end to simony, to the lay usurpation of ecclesiastical investiture, and, in a word, to purify the Church in France. Gregory VII whose reforming zeal was most ardent sent as Legate his "alter ego" Hugh, one-time Bishop of Die. The resolute and continued exertions of the Holy See were not without results, and in the XII century the Church in the South

was again rising to the moral grandeur of early days. But heresy was rampant. The Archbishop of Auch first drew Innocent III's attention to this danger. This Pope was an energetic prelate, quick to perceive the gravity of the crisis, and he responded immediately to the call. The attention



AN ALBIGENSIAN.

of Christendom, and especially of militant Christendom, was directed against the heresy. Thoughts of a Crusade to the East were abandoned and a Holy War against the Albigenses was declared. Those who had made a vow to fight the Saracens in expiation of their sins were allowed, even encouraged, to substitute the name of heretic for that of infidel. The same indulgences were offered, and monks

were sent far and wide to preach that "the labour was but small, the distance short, and yet the recompense was eternal." The seizure of an heretical neighbour's land was blessed by direct papal sanction. Under these conditions, zeal increased mightily, and one of the Catholic generals became so accustomed to massacre that he merrily wrote of the one at Toulouse as a sort of bout, "I never saw so many heads fly as there."

Thus was the Holy War begun. It was a war of the Pope, aided by outsiders, to which the greatest Southerners were averse, and it continued until "the spirit of the people of Languedoc was broken," until the progress of a fine and flourishing civilisation, greater than that of the jealous North, had been permanently stayed. The "beau saber" was at an end; and, as Villemain quaintly writes, "one could no longer go from castle to castle singing and offering verses to noble ladies. Everything was in a state of siege, and blood-stained by the war."

But it was not the heresy which had been condemned in the neighbouring Lombers nor the advent of the new Crusaders which Albi had greatest cause to dread at this period: it was the pest which threatened her, and leprosy brought by the old Crusaders of the East. The pest-ridden victims mercifully died; but the lepers lived on in even greater wretchedness than that of their fellow-sufferers of to-day. When their malady was discovered, they were led to the High Altar of the Cathedral and a black pall was thrown over them. For were they not dead to all human love and friendship? Was this not in truth a Mass

for the Dead? And was it not fitting that earth should be sprinkled on the body that so longed to return to earth? At the close of this most mournful service they were led to the leper-house and shut up in a cell which they hoped a merciful God might make their only Purgatory, that since they might not come out again alive, at death their spirit might be taken directly into heaven.

The city of Albi itself did not suffer the horrors of Toulouse, Béziers, or Lavaur, and continued the evolution which had begun in the century before the war was declared, and ended only in 1686 when the city became an archepiscopal seat.

This evolution was the gradual change in the political status of her Bishop. In 1144, when Viscount Roger swore an oath before the High Altar to abandon the seigneurial right to pillage episcopal chattels after a prelate's death, a step had been taken in this progress. Little by little the power of the Viscounts was less rigidly enforced, and that of the Bishop as insensibly increased. And fifty years later, when a commission was appointed to determine the respective rights of these princes, it was discovered that my Lord Bishops were in the position to successfully claim two-thirds of the "high justice." They soon inherited, as it were, the Viscount's right of coinage, they granted Albi her first Charter of liberties and gave her much greater freedom and prosperity than her Counts had ever insured, and until 1789 they bore the title of "Palatine princes."

At the most critical period of the growth of this power



"A MIGHTY MONUMENT OF FAITH AND TRIUMPH."—ALBI.

when the Cathedral-church lay in ruins, "destroyed by war and devastated by heretics," the powerful figure of Bernard de Castenet looms on the scene. This astute and energetic prelate established in Albi the three working orders of Saint Dominic, Saint Francis, and Mount Carmel, and, adding the force of the temporal to the religious, he imposed on the clergy, and wonderful to relate on himself, a tax of one-twentieth of their incomes. With that revenue and the gifts of the Faithful, he began in 1275 the great fortress-Church of Sainte-Cécile.

During the age of iron and blood, churches were often built in the protecting enclosure of castle-walls and so saved from the burning and pillaging of enemies. The Church finding this protection advantageous had "approved with gratitude." But, with changing times and sentiments, the lord of the castle's practical possession of the edifice was pregnant with dangers and difficulties; and in more than one instance the Bishop had deemed it wise to close the doors and galleries which communicated with the castle and to cut portals in the outer walls. It was clearly fitting that the Bishop should be sole master within his church, and to realise that ideal in troublous times it was necessary that a church should combine rude strength with its holy mission and that it should be both a fortress and a place of worship. Such a church the proud and famous Bishop Bernard determined to build in Albi. The city itself has few reminders of the religious wars, the Cathedral may be properly said to have none at all, as it was begun when the struggle was over. Yet the reminiscence, the in-

fluence of that Crusade, is plainly written there. Not only was it, as has been finely written, "a mighty monument of faith and of triumph against vanquished heresy," it was also a fortress against any future dangers or reverses, against heresies that might be yet to come, recalcitrant townsmen, roving marauders, or envious lords. And that Bishop Bernard's precaution was not useless was proven in 1422, when a company of adventurers—the Routiers—after burning Castel-viel, just across the moat, besieged Albi in vain. It was the magnificent strength of this church which added greatly to the renown of the See and attracted to it men of distinguished family and cultured taste, Cardinal d'Arras and the two Cardinals d'Amboise, who added to the Cathedral the delicate works of Renaissance art that are the delight of every eye which beholds them.

Several days are necessary to form even a superficial idea of Sainte-Cécile. For one must see it as it is, fancy it as it was, and pore over its long array of carvings and paintings. The first day is spent in marvellings, in glancings within and without, and the second passes quickly—a morning near the viaduct, an hour or two of the hot afternoon in the big, cool church, and sunset time at the bridge, seeing the church as Bernard de Castenet and his architects planned it, and indeed as it was before the Cardinals' day.

In those times that part of Albi which lies in front of the Cathedral was the King's town, administered by his Lieutenant, an independent settlement called Castel-viel. On the episcopal side of the moat which lay between the King's city and the city of the Bishops stood the fortress-Cathedral



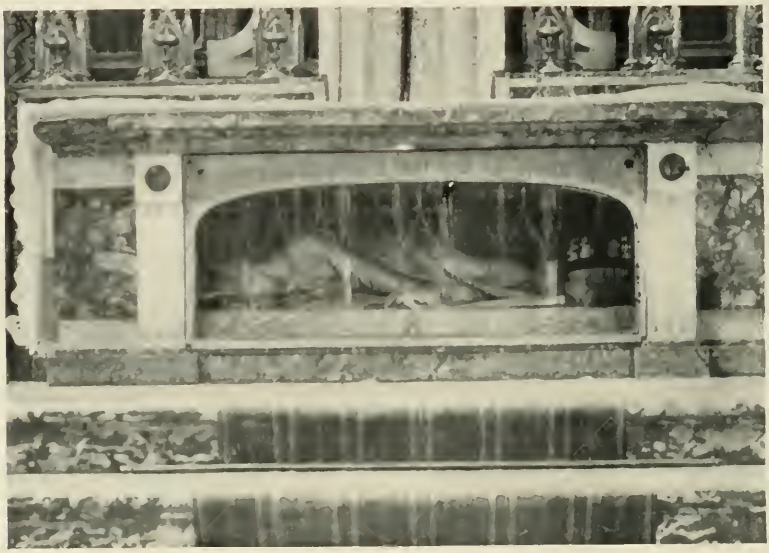
"THE APSE ROSE, A HIGH DEFENSIVE WALL."—ALBI.

whose threatening tower loomed above the royal bourg. This was the old, plain Sainte-Cécile built all of brick, the great keep which loses none of its mightiness even when seen to-day with its wealth of later ornament. Then it was part of the powerful system of fortifications, and a strong line of outworks connected it and the dependent buildings with the castle. It was flanked by heavy towers, with portcullis, drawbridges, and thick, protecting walls. And the large underground constructions and buttresses which reach into the Tarn could even now laugh at sieges if artillery were unknown. The south portal of the Cathedral, plain and strong, had also its drawbridge and portcullis; the apse rose as to-day, a high defensive wall with buttresses that seem turreted towers; and the roof, like the inner ramparts of a fort, had bastions, and openings through which burning oil could be poured on the foe beneath.

The interior of this great building is, in plan, Romanesque; in style, Gothic; a vast, vaulted hall, without column or pillar. The walls are pierced by tall, narrow windows that seem almost elongated loop-holes; and in regular succession down the nave, a row of shaft-like buttresses, deep enough to enclose the chapels, rise sheer to the lofty height of the roof.

Two giant, drum-shaped piers which support the tower at the west end add much to the room's appearance of solid strength; and clattering soldiers, moving in the guard-room behind, keeping watch towards Castel-viel, must have given heart to the timid souls who used to hide and pray in the church. Numbers are usually as dry as genealogies, but

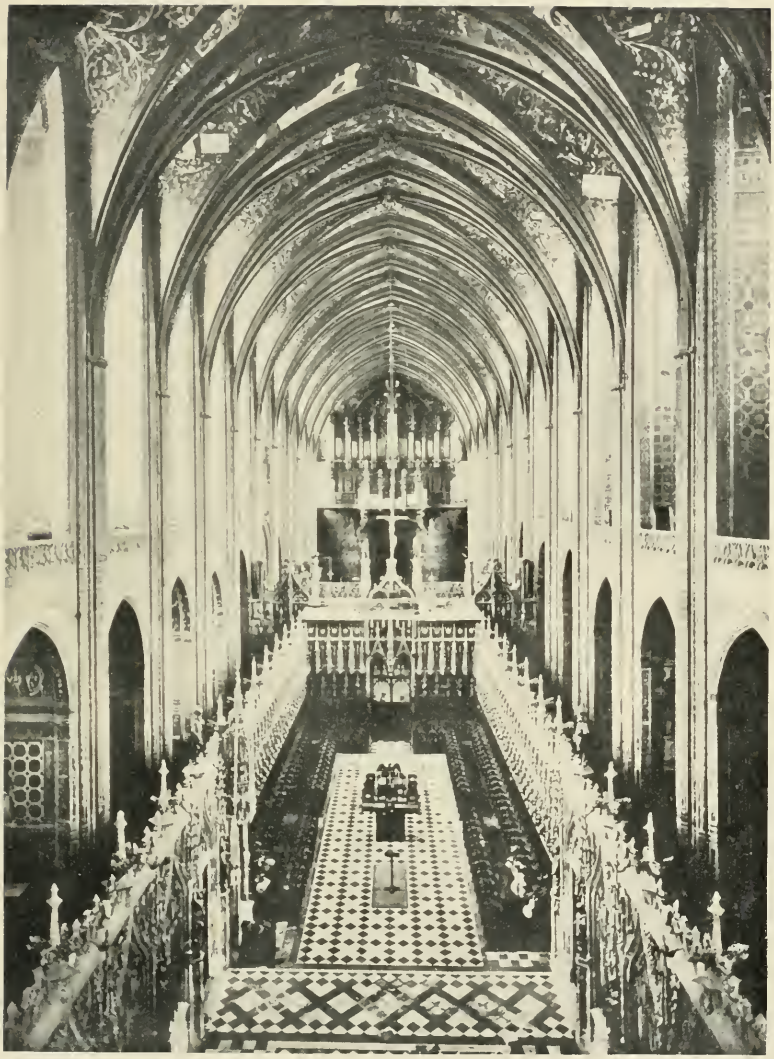
there is something awe-inspiring in large spaciousness; and when one considers the open of Albi's nave, three hundred feet long, eighty-two feet wide, and nearly a hundred feet high, its bare proportions have nobility; and those who had hidden there for safety, gazing into the far-away shadows



"THE EFFIGY OF SAINT CECELIA BENEATH THE PARISH ALTAR."—ALBI.

of the vault, must have felt the immensity of the power and presence of God in this the mightiest of His earthly houses.

Such feeling is lost in the interior of to-day. The guard-room has become a peaceful chapel; the big round piers flank the Parish Altar, and if they seem to have a more serious mission than to support the organ it is to illustrate, in the paintings which now cover them, the pains and perils of the Seven Deadly Sins. Here "the envious are in a frozen



"THE INTERIOR OF THIS GREAT BUILDING IS A VAST, VAULTED HALL, WITHOUT COLUMN OR PILLAR."—ALBI.

river to their loins, and a very cold wind beats about them, which when they wish to avoid, they plunge into the above mentioned ice." "The avaricious are in a place of great cauldrons, full of divers liquid metals boiling in the fire of hell, and in the aforesaid cauldrons the avaricious are



"THE VAULTING IS ALSO COVERED WITH PAINTINGS AFTER THE ITALIAN FASHION."— ALBI.

plunged to cure them of their love of gold." The punishment of the five remaining sins are depicted as vividly, and thus the old piers seem to stand rather for the strengthening of the soul than for that of the churchly building. The walls of the church are also softened and their strength belittled by the colour-schemes of a horde of Italian painters who fairly invaded the Cathedral in the XV and XVI cen-

turies and who carefully signed their names to the work, "Doneja pictor italus de Carpa," "Antonio de Lodi," and "Lorenzo de Modena." The immense vaulting is also covered with paintings after the Italian fashion. Unlike the walls where geometrical designs abound, the work is



"IT WAS POSSIBLE TO CARVE FROM . . BRITTLE STONE WHAT TO-DAY COULD HARDLY BE WROUGHT IN IRON."— ALBI.

here of finer thought, and amid conventional designs are numbers of heads in medallion, subjects from Church history, Saint Martin giving his cloak to the beggar, Sainte Liberata in her little niche, the Transfiguration of Our Lord, and an infinity of sacred subjects, of minute details, of careful designs, the result of years of most patient, skilful labour placed so high in the holy edifice that it is almost



"TO SEE THE CHOIR-SCREEN IS TO FORGET ALL ELSE."—ALBI.

lost to sight. Besides these paintings, which rather detract from than add to the church's dignity, there is a work of art so beautiful that to see it is to forget that it sadly cuts



"THE YOUNG AND MILD SAINT JOHN."—ALBI.

the church's simple lines and that it is too ornate to harmonise with the Cathedral's native style. To see the choir-screen is to forget all else. "One could pass whole hours in contemplating this lovely, ever-changing detail," writes Prosper Merimée, "in astonished wonder that it was possible

to find so many differing, graceful forms, that it was possible to carve from hard and brittle stone what to-day could hardly be wrought in iron or in bronze." In truth, the delicate yet virile design, the light traceries of the Gothic arches, the pinnacles and canopies, the statues of Saints and Prophets, the exquisite statuettes of the angels, and the lovely trellised entrance which precedes them all, are marvellous; and Merimée's "whole hours" might easily be spent in the study of form, of the artistic grace of the smallest detail, of the thought given to each Saint and to all his traditional characteristics. Here is the young and mild Saint John; Charlemagne, the powerful, facing Constantine whose line he was supposed to have continued; there is the heroic Judith; and the multitude of the heavenly hosts among whom Saint Michael may be sought. A morning within the screen, an afternoon without it, a whole day could be consumed and one might still return, and linger before the fair white fabric of this stone, which in some lights seems so graceful and so strong, and in others, but a bit of fairy lace woven of a morning's mist.

Not less beautiful is the Renaissance portal, which is said to be the work of some wandering masons from Strasbourg. A gateway, charmingly conceived, flanked by the last tower of the ancient fortified enclosure of the Cathedral's southern walls, leads to a flight of steps, and the porch at their top has a canopy of fragile carvings sustained by four gigantic pillars of stone. In the XVI century this baldaquined porch replaced the portcullis and the old, strong portal and must have been in as strange contrast



"THE LOVELY, TRELLISED ROOD-SCREEN."—ALBI.

to it as it now is to the great walls against which it leans. Yet here, as in the interior, the contrast of the detail and the general structure is not so startling in fact as in theory.



"THE RENAISSANCE PORTAL."— ALBI.

For when one looks at the massive whole, the little detail is lost; and when he studies the detail, he is far too near to have any perspective of the mighty whole. It has been said that in the strange architectural juxtapositions of Albi two great forces meet,—Renaissance and Feudalism; and

in these, which are among the most supreme creations of the two great forces, neither destroys the power or charm of the other. They stand, side by side, as plants and trees in a wild forest-growth, the flower of the Renaissance beneath the tall oak of Feudalism.

Before this stupendous creation one is amazed and almost awed. To explore it even casually requires so much more than the interest and attentiveness of the mere tourist, so much more time than the "sight-seer" can afford for one place or one Cathedral, that the thought of the profanation of hasty footsteps and careless glances reconcile those who love Sainte-Cécile to the fact that it lies in isolation on the Tarn, so far from the trend of modern travel that to see it one must journey long and slowly, as if coming in reverent pilgrimage, as is most fit.

Albi is the military Gothic in highest perfection, the Flamboyant in most charming delicacy. No cold and glorious creation of the North, no building of the many-sided genius of the South, shows the same originality, nor a truer grandeur than this brick Cathedral, and among all the great works of architecture which glorify Europe it is one of the most noble. That it should have survived to this day of lesser architecture, that it should have reached its full completion, that it should have withstood the siege of the XV century and outlived the Revolution when only one man stood between it and the destructiveness of a raving mob,—these things are the breathless wonder, the abiding joy to those who love to come to Albi—and to come again—and still again—and look upon it.



"THE PORCH . . . HAS A CANOPY OF FRAGILE CARVINGS."—ALBI.

Rodez.

Rodez is another of the many towns of France built picturesquely on a hill. In the valleys beneath her lie little villages and stretches of green fields, dotted here and there are the white farm-houses and the mills of Aveyron, and far across the undulating plains rise the mountains of Cantal, the mountains of Aubrac, and the low Cévennes.

The storms and winds of ages have swept over Rodez and she has seen and survived the rise and fall of many peoples; the Gallic tribes, the Romans, the barbarians, and the Franks, all came within her borders, and left a heritage of legend, miracle, and history which it is difficult to differentiate. The mystery which lies about the origin of old cities, their confused memory of the motley procession of armies, tribes, and peoples who have come and gone, is well illustrated in the face which looks down enigmatically from a niche in the wall of Rodez Cathedral. It is symbolic,—but of what? Which people does it represent? Of whose religion or whose ideas is it an emblem? Is this the face of Ruth, the city's erotic and far-famed divinity? Is it a sphinx? Or can it be the face of the



"THE FACE WHICH LOOKS DOWN ENIGMATICALLY FROM THE WALL."—RODEZ.

Phœnician Hercules, patron of the pagan Gallic civilisation, and not the relic of a Christian age? No one can tell. And much even of Rodez' Christianity is lost in the gloom of her forgotten past. Gregory of Tours writes in the VI century that Saint-Dalinas built a Cathedral in honour of Our Lady, and tore it down, and re-built it several times "unto its greater perfection;" but the fate of the church during the later centuries of wars and wild turmoils is a mystery. Nothing authentic is known until the dramatic record of a winter's day in 1276, when the choir of the then existing Cathedral fell, and Raymond de Calmont, the Bishop, was confronted by the ruins of his church. This was the period of Gothic supremacy. The Sainte-Chapelle, Reims, Chartres, and Amiens were almost completed. In the North there was no style except the Gothic, and its immense popularity had already kindled the enthusiasm of the South. Prelates not only wished to build new churches in the new style, they were eager even to destroy their monuments of fine old Romanesque and replace them with the larger and more sumptuous Gothic. Clermont succeeded in this vandalism, Narbonne finished her beautiful choir, and Elne commenced outside the narrow limits of her old Cathedral the apse-wall which still stands unfinished, a sign of her allegiance to the new.

Rich in the great possessions of his family and his large episcopal revenues, the Bishop of Rodez determined upon a complete reconstruction of his Cathedral-church, of greater proportions than the old, and of a nobler, more imposing

style. In 1277 the present Cathedral of Notre-Dame was begun, and less than twenty-five years later its beautiful choir was near completion, and Raymond de Calmont had died. Something of the same distressing compromise was then effected as that which exists in Saint-Etienne of Toulouse; the old nave and the new choir of unequal height and breadth were joined together as well as might be, and for many years the great work remained at a standstill. After a time the Chapter began to realise that without a wealthy, an ambitious, or a self-sacrificing prelate, the regular contributions and revenues would never be sufficient to finish the church. They put their wise heads together, and with the aid of the famous Peter de Castelnau devised newer and stronger methods of appeal which for years successfully harassed the lower clergy. Spiritual favours, graded in just proportion to the generosity of the donor, had already been granted by the Archbishop of Bourges and John XXII. These were increased. Ecclesiastics whose enthusiasm was assured by the promise of one-third of all the contributions they gained, were sent over the entire diocese to explain the nature and benefit of the spiritual favours which the Chapter could offer, and Curés were instructed to aid the propaganda in sermons and in the confessional, to call their parishioners to meet the Bishop's envoy, and to receive him with hospitality. Foreseeing the heart-burnings which such orders would cause, these instructions were enjoined under pain of excommunication, and in order that the example of the clergy might be conspicuously good, the priests were courteously and firmly

invited to place their names at the head of the subscription list.

These spiritual offers seem to have been appreciated by the laity. Yet, notwithstanding the legacies that were received, the moneys, and gifts of grain and wine, the work dragged on but slowly; and the Bishops, who administered the section of the town called the Bourg, had continuous difficulties with the Counts, rulers of that part which was called the Cité. In 1501, the See being vacant, Alexander VI and the majority of the Chapter differed absolutely in the selection of the new prelate, and the Pope's appointee was obliged to sustain his cause by force. An earlier Bishop had been suspected of plotting with the English, and another was believed to have been prepared to deliver the city to the League; and if the building of the Cathedral never entirely ceased, during these times of irregularities and irreverent distrusts it went on rather lamely.

After the partial completion of the choir with its polygonal chapels, and of the clock-tower which stood isolated near the apse, the north portal was built. This, the church's principal entrance, is of the more severe and simple Gothic of the XIV century, with the usual sculpturing of figures and dramatic scenes. Broad flights of steps lead up to it, and, although not wonderfully beautiful, it is more vigorous and impressive than the door of the south transept, which is gracefully formed and conventionally designed in the luxuriant development of the Flamboyant.

The choir finished, the transepts and their portals finally completed, the Bishops of Rodez met new difficulties. Part

of the episcopal Palace interfered with the proper line of the nave, and the logical site of the façade was encumbered by the ramparts. To demolish the offending Palace was not a



"THE SOUTH PORTAL."— RODEZ.

difficult problem, and the nave walls rose regularly; but to cut the line of the ramparts, the Bishop was obliged to face the Consuls, the hereditary opponents of his office. The

result, as was usual in such cases, was a compromise. Continuing the line of fortifications as its plan exacted, and necessarily without detriment to their strength, the façade was logically built like the strong flank of a mediæval castle. Since no citizen lived outside the protection of the ramparts,



FORTIFICATIONS OF THE EPISCOPAL PALACE.— RODEZ.

portals would have served only enemies, and the narrow lancets which give little light as windows were most useful loop-holes for defending archers. The additions of later date—the charming rose-window placed above the defensive line, the little turrets which rise at its side, the disfigurement of the XVIII century which looks like a head-board, and the small windows of the tower—are inharmonious, but they

cannot destroy the effect of this façade. Completing an exterior of graceful and destructible elegance, a churchly edifice and not a fortress-Cathedral, facing to-day a pleasant open square that is planted in grass and flowers and shaded by little bushy trees, it is rather its stern walls that seem strangely ill-conceived. But in the days of the Consuls this was not so; and the loop-holes, the stout, square trunks of the towers, and the expanse of blank stone wall tell that consular rather than ecclesiastical ideals were made to prevail in the building, and that the façade was originally a part of the ramparts rather than a part of the church.

On a spring night of 1510, some thirty years after this work was begun, flames began to flicker about the clock-tower, the wooden spire became a seething mass against the dark sky, its leaden sheets burned red-hot, and even the bells began to melt. The wind blew a rain of fire and liquid metal across the roofs, and the people were terrorised. In the midst of the panic the Bishop appeared and commanded some of the people to go into the Cathedral and pray. Others he took with him to the neighbouring Church of Saint-Amas, and in solemn procession they bore along the narrow streets the relics of the patron Saint of Rodez. They approached the burning tower as nearly as they dared, and scarcely were the sacred bones uplifted, writes Father Bean, "when the strong wind ceased to blow and the flame, bowing suddenly, began to burn gently on its pile of stone as fire upon an altar, and honoured thus our Bishop's faith and our patron's glorious memory." Public prayers continued until the day was well advanced, and after a Thanks-

giving Mass the Bishop, without taking off his priestly robes, stepped to a window and looked in the clear morning light on the pile of stones which alone remained of tower and bells. After a few moments he said, "If the ringing of the Angelus has ceased yet the voice of God speaks loud enough for me to know what He desires," and immediately the re-building was begun.

How much of the old tower remained is not known, perhaps one, perhaps two, or even three plain stages; but the light and graceful superstructure which is seen to-day was the loving work of François d'Estaing. According to an old inscription this prelate was consumed by an "immense love" for the Virgin, and he conceived this as her apothoesis.

For more than ten years the work went on, a story with light traceried windows, another higher still, slender balconies of leaves, festoons, little niches, and decorations growing more luxuriant, more dainty, and more delicate until the top was reached. On this high pedestal he placed a procession of gazing and adoring saints, angels, and martyrs, and four figures, perhaps the Evangelists, who stand ready to burn incense; and, when the work had advanced this far, the prelate wrote on his monument, "It is finished, it is finished," and placed above the saints and angels, far above the city, his glorious patron the Virgin Mother of God.

The Cathedral was now finished in all its essential parts, and stood much as it stands to-day, a really great monument with much of the logic of historic sequence but with little architectural unity. It was 1525, and the Ages of Faith were



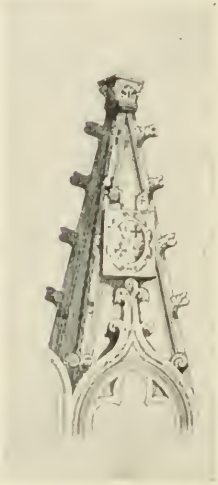
"THE CATHEDRAL WAS NOW FINISHED, AND STOOD MUCH AS IT STANDS TO-DAY."— RODEZ.

dead, enthusiasm for church-building belonged to an epoch that had passed away. A new era was beginning in which great national traditions were to be despised and all the forms of classic antiquity to have so complete an ascendency that even their debased Italian imitations were the admiration of architects otherwise sane. It was at this time that the magnificent Cardinal d'Armagnac, King's Lieutenant, counsellor of state, ambassador, Cardinal, Abbot, and administrator of two other Sees, became Bishop of Rodez, and ordered the completion of the western towers in the style of the Renaissance. Perhaps because Catholics were beginning to spend much of their effort to protect themselves from the invasions of Protestant heresies, perhaps because the Cardinal-Bishop soon became Archbishop of Toulouse, the work of building was almost immediately abandoned. Its most noteworthy achievement was an inscription which may still be read on the façade of the stubby, unfinished tower, a fitting commentary on the spirit of the style whose glories it was intended to presage, "Fall pyramids of Egypt, insensate masses, and let honour be given to the true marvels of the world."

Built in the northern style, but by architects of the Midi, the Cathedral is not only free from conventionality, but marked by little idiosyncrasies and local necessities. The flying-buttresses are simple and primitive and very economical, and the roof construction was modified on account of the rigorous winters of Rodez. The large Gothic windows are not very beautiful, nor are the portals more than pleasing; and with its many differing styles, Notre-Dame, even with its rose and clock-tower, is more imposing from a distance.

Except this tower and this rose and the numbers of escutcheons which attest the vanity of its builders, the exterior has none of the interest of detail which characterises its interior.

The choir was formerly protected by a graceful stone screen of the Renaissance, an imitation of the "ambons" of the early Church. Two little stairways led to its platform, and the Canons mounted here on Maundy Thursday to sing the Passion of Christ and the prophetic Lamentations of Jeremiah. Less than fifty years ago the screen was demolished in order that the worshippers might see the ceremonies of the altar. The débris was about to be sold as old building material, when some one had the happier thought of re-constructing it inside the south portal. The position may seem strangely bizarre, but the delicacy of the stone-work and the general design have at least been preserved.



"A TURRET WITH ITS EPISCOPAL ESCUTCHEON."—RODEZ.

Another screen of the Renaissance stands before the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, and its multitude of carved details also tells a story. On one side is Christ Victorious surrounded by the Sibyls of the Joyful Prophecies. On the other side is the suffering Christ, and with him the Sibyl of the Hellespont predicting the Crucifixion, and her sister of the Tibur with the glove, symbol of the Flagellation. Another

of these strange sisters holds a white bud and the full-blown rose, prefiguring the Annunciation; and still another, a Persian seeress, steps on the serpent who deceived Eve. The



"A SCREEN STANDS BEFORE THE CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE."— RODEZ.

anachronistic naïveté of these subjects, so minutely and skilfully carved, is equalled by the reredos of the chapel itself. This group of figures, which represents the Entombment, is at once amusing and touching. It is of the early Renaissance which was so enthusiastic, so uncritical,

so sophisticated with the enthusiasm and sophistication of adventurous youth. There is the artist's effort to depict a scene which he knew was oriental, the strong counter-in-



"THIS GROUP OF FIGURES REPRESENTS THE ENTOMBMENT."— RODEZ.

fluence of the conventional conception, and the beginnings of a more plastic, more dramatic treatment of the art of sculpture. The acme of the artist's Orientalism are the quaint figures of Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus in



"THE STONE REREDOS REPRESENTS THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE."—RODEZ.

pilgrim garb; the mediæval tradition is strongly evident in the hovering angels and the costumes of the Holy Women; and in the faces of the Virgin and the Saints, and particularly in the dead body of the Christ, there is a strong and tender feeling.

The stone reredos in another chapel, of the same epoch as the southern portal and the choir-screen, has the same tenderness of sentiment with an even greater ingenuousness. Through a low Gothic gateway and over a little bridge Christ has entered the Garden of Gethsemane. The disciples, waiting, have fallen asleep, the mediæval castle which represents Jerusalem is sombre in the shadows of the night, and our Lord has begun to pray. Above is God the Father, long-bearded, aged, and paternal, holding the world in one hand and silently blessing with the other. An angel brings the inexorable response to the Son's entreaties, the Crown of Thorns, the nails, the Cross; and other angels bear scrolls on which are written the words of Christ, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death."

These reredoses and the screens are really interesting works of the Renaissance. But the tribune, which was built about the west end of the nave in the XVI century, is a disfigurement. Here the clergy sat during sermons, and from their midst, the Bishop arose, crozier in hand, and mitred, to bless the preacher. Below this tribune was the High Altar of the parish, whose services were so separated from those of the Chapter that during the years of the Bishopric's suppression the choir was abandoned; and now there is a High Altar at each end of the church.

The long choir, shut in by its screen, must have been a church in itself. Instead of sitting motionless and almost mute, as we often see them now, the Canons took an active



"THE TRIBUNE."— RODEZ.

part in the service, and with the Bishop, archdeacons, vicars, and choir-boys, the Curé, and the priests of the parish, there was much measured movement and singing; with lights,



"THE SETTING FOR THIS WORSHIP WAS FITTINGLY ORNATE."—RODEZ.

the suave odours of incense, beautiful laces, and gorgeous vestments. Every day Matins were sung at five, two Masses before ten, Vespers, and Complines, and within the altar-screen God was continually adored. The setting for this great worship was fittingly ornate. Finely sculptured stalls were built in 1478, and the Bishop's throne with its thin Gothic spire; and all about the choir-wall hung ancient tapestries. The stalls still remain, but during the restoration of 1825 the tapestries were taken down. And, although they had survived the terrorists of '93, more churchly-vandals used them for carpets and foot-rugs and not one was replaced upon the walls. Bereft of choir-screen, of the softening tints of hangings, and of the smaller details hidden in the chapels, the whole interior of the Cathedral is simple and plain.

Sheer and straight her pillars rise, and end in a little banded moulding, and arch after arch is lost in the shadows of the narrow vaulting of the side aisles. The central nave has a plain triforium, and the long and slender Gothic windows above cast changing, flickering lights into the high vault. The native stone of Rodez, of which the church is built, is a rose that slightly shades to brown, and has all the softness and the deepness of an orchid's tones. The church is plain from simplicity and not from penury; narrow, but from singleness of purpose not from pettiness; it is unfaltering in its uplift, and its aisles have a pure architectural form of supreme beauty that is suggestive neither of the glories of the Church nor of its austerities, but rather of perfect quiet, peace, and the eternal majesty of God Himself.

III.

VILLAGE CATHEDRALS.

Viviers.

As a beautifully-wrought sonnet to a great outburst of song, so is the little Rhine, in history, beauty, and picturesqueness, to the river Rhone. From the moment when the Rhone rises in its glacier and trickles down a mountain valley into France, it is so capricious, tumbling, and rushing, that along much of its course boats may not venture, and by a mischievous, half-malicious waywardness that only adds to its charm, it protects the surrounding country from that most terrible of modern European blights,—the tourist. Along its rapid waters one need never fear to hear the sound of high-pitched voices or to see the sign which praises the "fifty-seven varieties." The valley of the Rhone is indeed invaded by the railroad; but between Lyons and Marseilles, the service is so "good" that the ruins of Donzère, Châteauneuf, and Viviers often escape unseen. In the day or two usually spent at Avignon or Arles, the Mistral may arrive, the natives' "good wind," which purifies the land from any miasmic taint; but tourists, fleeing its keen blast, describe the valley as "sandy, dusty, windy," so unpleasant a place that unimaginative persons who have never been there, see in it a French Sahara, with the curious addition of a fairly large, sweet-watered river. There is great beauty on

the Rhone; much neatness and cleanliness among those who dwell on its banks, but he who cannot achieve these ends without a tub, will be unhappy there; while those to whom a good salad is spoiled by a dash—or two—of garlic, and to whom cooking in olive oil is "sickening," will often wander hungry in this valley of plenty, and although at night the sheets will always be clean, they will sometimes be unbleached. The Rhone is for the dreamer who loves old legends and historic tales, for the pedestrian who has time to turn every old stone, who can enjoy, with cosmopolitan relish, the good cooking of the land, and who when the night has come, is tired enough to sleep, however practical the linen of his bed. Not all the world is so endowed; and the traveller, like a pious pilgrim of the olden times, wandering up the valley when the sun sets red behind the mountains, when the angelus bells of the morning chime softly from the church-towers of historic villages, or when resting under some big tree for the noon-day's siesta, had this wish always on his lips,—"May this Rhone, this beautiful, solitary Rhone, be ever caviare to the multitude."

It was from beneath such a tree, with a knapsack lunch before him, that he first looked across at Viviers,—remembered old Omar's words, and thought that the view was indeed "paradise enow." In the foreground was the long bridge over the twisting, rushing Rhone; on this side were the rocky, craggy peaks of the bare Alps; opposite, the more gentle lines of the green Cévennes, while on a hill which sloped to the river's edge perched old Viviers. A single tower of her castle frowned with senile impotence at

Châteauneuf on the other side, whose big walls gaping in ruin seemed ironically named. Here and there, above and below, decaying towers rose along the river. Around that of Viviers houses and bits of ruined ramparts cluster, and near-by stands the Cathedral with its queer flying-buttresses in picturesque relief.

So full was the traveller's memory of snatches of ancient tales that the walk across the bridge was a slow one. In the beginnings of her history, Viviers, like Avignon, was a little fishing village which the Romans garrisoned to protect Alba Augusta, a neighbouring city of importance, the seat of a Bishopric. In the early centuries of Christianity Alba was destroyed by Chrocus' barbaric horde, and suffering the fate of many another city of beautiful Temples, Arenas, and Theatres, the encroaching earth covered its ruins and Alba was later re-built as the unimportant town of Aps. Viviers, its ancient port, still stood, and after the crisis had passed many inhabitants of the ruined city descended from their hiding-places in the mountains, and settled in the Rhone village which soon moved to the cliff above for safety. And here the Bishopric of Alba was re-established.

The prelates of those days were made of sterner stuff than those who succeeded them at the Renaissance, and the Bishops who lived at Viviers were among the haughtiest of France. Their Palace stood on the rock of Châteauvieux, at the extremity of the town; and on three sides its walls were built along the edge of a cliff, high and inaccessible. The defence was magnificently strong. From the castle windows, the keen eyes of the great ecclesiastics could sweep

the country far up the Rhone to the mountains. These Bishops must have loved their rocky lookout, for they were proud, strong men who delighted in fierceness and in strength, and were not only nobles of the Church, but temporal suzerains as well, who wrested gifts and privileges from the Kings of France and Emperors of Germany. Conrad III gave them the right to coin money; Frederic Barbarossa confirmed the power, and in 1498 the Bishops had grown so great that they had become men of immense wealth, Counts of Viviers, and Princes of Donzère and of Châteauneuf. This apogee of worldly rank proved too severe a strain upon the human nature which is beneath every priestly frock; and like many another prelate of the age the Bishop of Viviers found a château in the country more to his liking than a stern castle in the town. He moved to Bourg-Saint-Andéol, and for over three hundred years the episcopal city, Viviers, was governed "in absentia." The castle had gradually degenerated, and after being sacked by the Protestants it was used for a convent. And the Bishop, gracefully accepting from the Ladies of Saint Dominic the gift of a vast and sumptuous estate lying on the Rhone, built there—not without some minor financial difficulties—a château that was in every way worthy of the beautiful gardens. It is of the Renaissance of the XVIII century, a charming "Sans-Souci." The shady, sloping terraces are "bathed by the river," and instead of grave prelates, chanting low their daily prayers, one looks in these fair grounds for lords and ladies of the Court, dressed perhaps as Watteau swains and graceful shepherdesses and conning songs much

lighter than the Bishop's words of prayer. Scarcely fifty years after the episcopal installation in this charming spot, the grim Revolution began, Monseigneur apostatised, and, says a native writer, "as if God wished to give the holy residence a time of purification," it remained closed, or was used as a granary at the time of the great Concordat, and it was not until the reorganisation of 1817 that the Bishopric was restored to Viviers.

Going into the town, the traveller climbed streets that grew more and more disused till finally he came upon houses that bore the escutcheons of former Canons, and he recalled that the Canons of to-day, who have been living meagrely and who now will live in still leaner style, are very different from the proud and important personages who bore their titles in centuries long gone by. The Chapter of Viviers consisted of Canons of Honour, Titulary, and Honourary Canons, and had at one time, forty-five members. But in 1333 the insufficiency of the general revenues led to a reduction of this goodly number to twenty. As certain well-defined quarterings of nobility are said to have been required for admission into this body, the Cathedral has been served by many who were afterwards made Bishops and Cardinals, and one of her Archdeacons became Pope under the title of Gregory XI. Legend has it that in her great mediæval days twenty of the forty Canons were laymen, mighty lords who claimed the right to bring their wives into the choir-stalls, and even to enter the church armed cap-a-pie, and, if so be that it seemed good to them, on horseback.

However this may have been, in the midst of their old

escutcheoned houses, in the serene quiet of most silent ways, stands their Cathedral. Here the early Bishops of Viviers are believed to have built a Cathedral which the Saracens destroyed; here on a bleak February day of 1119 a new church was consecrated by Pope Calixtus II in person. The old Canon de Baume wrote quaintly that "persons who had known other Canons who were living before the repairing of 1500" said that this Cathedral of the XII century had three naves broken by lines of six large pillars, and that it resembled Saint-Trophime at Arles. To this plain and simple nave a Gothic choir was added, and about the apse a series of low, protruding chapels had been begun when the Huguenots succeeded in entering the town, and, going through the streets with "frantic shrieks," found the Cathedral, the object of their particular detestation. They destroyed its naves and chapels, stole all its gold and silver Crosses, Chalices, Monstrances, and ornaments, and even the silver shoe-buckles of the priests. After these outrages, the destruction of the choir began; but the first man who climbed one of its delicate pinnacles, fell, and was instantly killed; and this accident, considered by Catholics and Protestants alike as an omen or miracle, saved the rest of the church.

The work of restoration was slowly and poorly accomplished, and to-day when Saint-Vincent is studied for itself alone, apart from any beauty of situation, it is found to be a curious combination of styles. The Romanesque tower stands apart, and is separated from the Cathedral by the rather generous breadth of the porch. In olden times it was called "la Bramadière," because from it a sentinel brayed or cried at

the approach of danger; now the only creatures which haunt it are a few humorous gargoyles, but it is still stout and firm or they would have fallen from it as rats desert a sinking ship; and with its heavy base, its fortified, octagonal sides and surmounting crenellations, it dominates the Cévennes for miles, beautiful and formidable.

The western porch, which stands at the top of the hill-side, is approached by a long flight of steps, and its Gothic canopy gives the Cathedral an entrance of becoming dignity. At each side, on the outer wall, the outline of high, slim arches recalls the nave which Pope Calixtus saw, and the side-walls, severely plain, seem also to be of the old southern build. But the apse is Gothic, and curiously, wonderfully made. There are galleries and gargoyles, little turrets, and turrets so tall they are diminutive spires, a small machicolated tower, flying-buttresses, and on one side of the nave strange, heavier buttresses that spring from the south wall and rest on great foundations of their own. All these details are adorned with the most delicate, lace-like carvings; and it would seem as if their sculptors must have chipped and chiselled most tenderly and most busily, during many months, to have produced this multitude of exquisite designs which ornament the Cathedral walls.

The interior of Saint-Vincent is as curious as its exterior. The details of the tower, the well, the dark, narrow stairs, the domed chapel, and the lookout, are of the days of wars and fine old Romanesque; and from both architectural and archæological interest the traveller peers long into their dark and dusty corners. But in the main body of the church

this interest is tempered by a spirit of criticism. The three-aisled nave which fell beneath the Huguenot's hammer was



"THE WESTERN PORCH IS APPROACHED BY A LONG FLIGHT OF STEPS."—VIVIERS.

replaced by a high, open room that seems foreshortened, and too economically planned to harmonise with its ornate choir, where the great curves of the vaulting, the Flamboyant

traceries, both the roses and the tall windows have an almost opulent beauty. It is the same delicacy and almost riotous luxuriance that exists outside, but the relations between the outer walls and the apse are less intimate than those between the room and the choir: and here the luxuriance seems a somewhat ill-conceived extravagance. The windows that are partially walled up, the bare nave walls, the practical plainness of the oaken stalls, and the hideous High Altar combine to overpower the beauty of the choir. Even the tapestries, acquired in the XIX century, are too neatly stretched in narrow gilt frames. The latest addition to the Cathedral, a gilded chandelier, dwarfs the lovely rose-windows, makes the statues of Christ and the Virgin, which stand canopied against the choir-wall, look like pygmies, and, far from beautifying the church, this huge and expensive ornament throws every line of the interior into bad proportion, and seems like a large, malevolent monster in a small cage.

The chapels of the Cathedral lie, as it were, outside. From the choir or the nave one can enter several of them by small doors, and each communicates with its neighbours by means of a narrow passage which extends outside the choir-wall. They are quite separated from the main body of the church, of all sizes and epochs, and Masses might be said in them all and at the High Altar simultaneously without the sound of one priestly voice disturbing that of another.

As in these chapels, so in the Cathedral, many epochs seem to have played a part. Foundations of a very early building undoubtedly aid in supporting the present walls, the tower

is of the XII century, some stones of the façade are, perhaps, as old, the Gothic choir is of 1500, and the new nave, re-consecrated in 1597, has an XVIII century vaulting. Yet he



"THE TOWER IS FINELY BUILT."—VIVIERS.

who would insist on this lack of harmony would be churlish indeed, for the tower is finely built, and the apse most graciously Flamboyant. And when in many a pleasant walk among the hills or by the river one or another of these

details comes into sight without the other, the traveller is constrained to admit that this Cathedral is like some delightful woman, not perfectly beautiful nor perfectly formed, but so picturesque, so varied, and so full of charm that one lingers long at her feet in admiration.

Uzès. After the poverty of Notre-Dame-et-Saint-Castor of Nîmes and the mediocrity of Alais, the traveller turned his face—somewhat wearily—toward Uzès, which the cautious guide-book calls "an ancient and interesting town."

At a junction on the main line, he took one of the two slow, small trains which daily puff their way up-country. From the very first the journey was delightful. Valleys and gentle undulating hills spread into the far distance, all alight with spring sunshine. Far away he saw the famous Roman bridge which crosses the Gard, magnificent in height and boldness, a strange monument in its deserted loneliness. A few little villages lay near the tiny stations or perched on the low hills near-by. There were miles and miles of fields, and in this rural quiet the train crept so slowly and so lumberingly that the traveller felt it was carrying him along a receding roadway of Time. He found "Uzès" a station without a town, and with a rumbling old coach to make the one-mile trip between the two. A polite driver invited "Monsieur" to mount, and "Monsieur" as politely declined. He would continue that journey into the past on foot; so he swung his camera and bag across his shoulder, and gaily started forth. He had not been long on the march when the

coach passed him with great cracking of whip. The bright morning was exhilarating. "Let us fancy," said he to an imaginary companion, "that the old omnibus is my lady's coach of state; and ourselves, troubadours, wandering toward the Ducal Castle."

For a long time the old city was invisible, and then before the wanderer's eyes came a sight so truly mediæval that he feared he was a victim of his own conspirings. At the top of the hill he had been slowly ascending stood a castle, and all about it clustered the little houses of the townspeople whom it had protected. And above castle and town the big donjon tower of the XII century rose threateningly. Just so, eight hundred years ago, must its prototype have dominated the surrounding country and glowered down on threatening armies; and just so must little houses have crowded about it in perfect safety and the church towers have risen above the crooked roofs. So real is the Mediævalism of Uzès that the traveller did not notice, until he hurried into the town, that its outer walls and fortifications were gone.

Passing through quiet streets, he came upon a little square, surrounded by old arcades, with a fountain in the centre. Between the cobbles of its pavement weeds were sprouting. Near this square was another as ancient; and close by rose the high crenellated tower of the Duchy. Never did the division between the nobility and the people have a more vivid illustration. A street that was a mere alley divided the ducal walls from the city houses. Yet within and without the walls were two different peoples. Within

was the great courtyard, large enough for a mounted cavalcade, surrounded by the many apartments of the castle; another courtyard, smaller and with pleasant shade-trees, a place for sonnets and fair ladies; there also was a Gothic chapel, a well, lodging-places for many retainers and servants, stables, and a huge battlemented keep,—it was the "strong place" of the Middle Ages, sufficient unto itself. The duke might come among the townsfolk, but they were utterly shut out from him. Even in the ministrations of Holy Church, priests came to his chapel, and here, within the Castle gates, the burial of his family took place.

Thinking on these things, the traveller was not surprised to find that the people's church, the Cathedral, lay at the other end of the town, nor that its history was apart from that of the town's feudal lords. It was the Cathedral which reminded him that Uzès was the Roman "Ucetia," early reclaimed from imperial paganism. A small crypt still remains near-by to tell of the first centuries of Christianity, but little is known either of the extent of the pagan city or of the history of its comparatively peaceful Mediævalism. Catholicism and the Reformation brought to Uzès its one supreme moment. In the first wars of dissension between the Church and the Albigenses, Uzès was not the scene of any prominent action: but the entire country was so profoundly moved by bigotry that she could not long escape the strong emotions of partisanship, and from the beginning of the religious struggles of the XVI century she embraced the new doctrines with fervour. The change in belief was so overwhelming that in 1621 the Bishop, all his Chapter, and a



"IT IS THE 'TOUR FENESTRELLE,' A ROMANTIC NAME THAT SUITS ITS GRACEFUL DELICACY."— UZÈS.

great body of the people left the Church; and in an access of demoniac enthusiasm destroyed the venerable Cathedral of Saint-Théodoric.

The building which rose from these ruins was of the XVII and XVIII centuries, and this disappointing knowledge led the traveller to "make haste slowly," to put off as long as possible the discovery of a second Castres or another Alais. He did not know what his first glimpse of the church would prove. For architects have so many technicalities to explain, they often neglect to tell the relation of the building they describe to its surroundings. A lazy calm and quiet lay over the country, and the afternoon light was only beginning to die away. Walking toward the end of the town, the traveller saw, as it seemed to him, a small park. It was on a slight elevation, and the trees which filled it grew carelessly, almost at will. Around this park was a fence of graceful, conventional design, and its stone had the tinge of age which is so charming in the statuary of an old Italian garden. And there, from among the cluster of trees, arose a tower, the surprisingly fine detail a minor Cathedral can give, like an oasis in its desert of commonplaces. It is a round tower of seven stages. The first stage is square, the others are round, and four are pierced with a series of open arcades, which give to the whole shaft a peculiar lightness. It is the "tour fenestrelle," a romantic name that suits its graceful delicacy. It is a campanile, a true bell-tower, and the only part of the early church which escaped the frantic Protestants of the XVII century.

It was a great surprise to find that the "park" was a close,

to discover a French Cathedral apart, in any sense excluded from the busiest of town-life. It is true that Saint-Théodoric is so near that children play around it, and, tiptoeing, even hide from their companions behind its big doors. But the church stands in dignified retirement. To reach its portal, one must mount a double series of stone steps and walk across a considerable open space; the approach is quite impressive, and the arrival equally disappointing. The interior is gloomy, with two stories of unbeautiful gallery; and the façade is "fine" and "modern," devoid of interest; and he who views the tower from the dusty roadside sees all the beauty which remains to Saint-Théodoric of Uzès.

Saint-Pons. Roman memories persisted in the South of France long after Roman rule was gone, and the name given to the mediæval Saint-Pons is that of an imperial senator and martyr of the III century. Saint-Pons is a charming, rambling village, lying in a narrow defile of the western Cévennes, and, when the traveller stood in the centre of the town he felt he could almost touch the mountains which rise, straight and abrupt, on either side. Such a quaint little place one seldom sees; the river Jaur, a gay mountain stream, tumbles through the centre, diminutive bridges connect the streets on either side, and primitive factories busily hum and whirr. In spite of them, Saint-Pons is old-fashioned and small, with high, battered houses, narrow, darksome by-ways, and one main street.

At the beginning of his journey, the traveller might have

wondered how so small a spot could ever have been a Bishopric. But in the South he had become familiar with antiquity lost, and vanished greatness, and stones and ruins

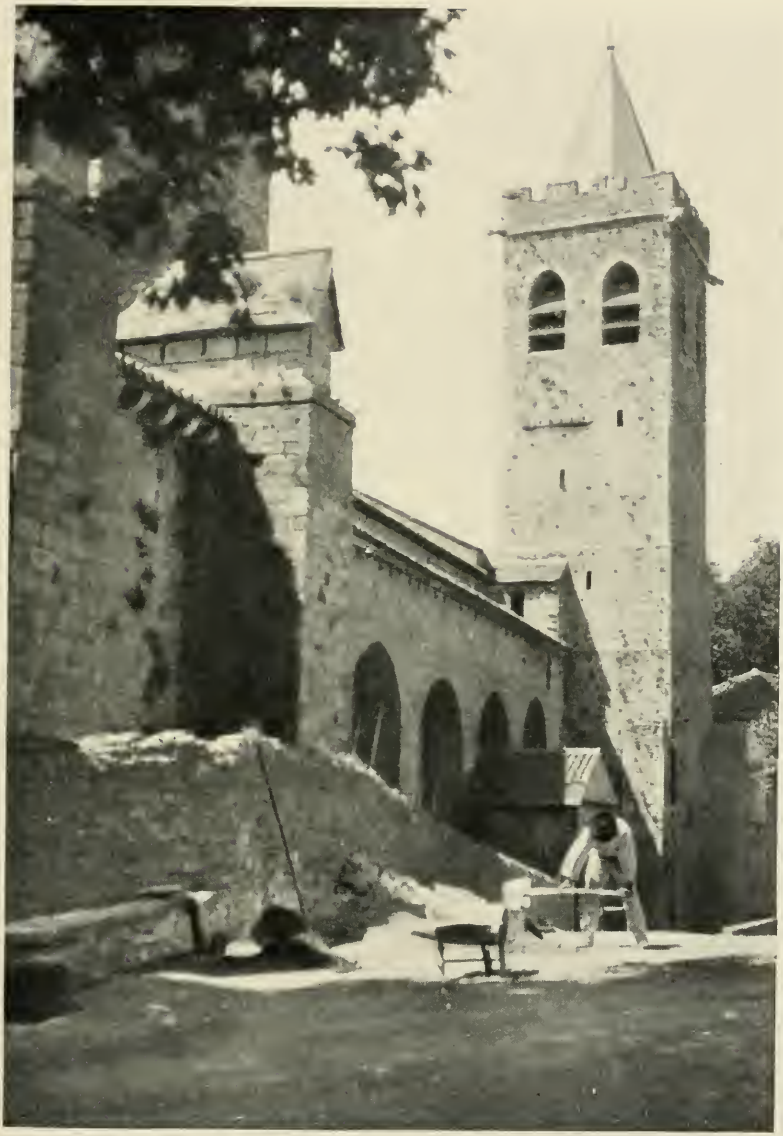


"A CHARMING, RAMBLING VILLAGE."—SAINT-PONS.

were eloquent to his eye. Wandering along the river, past little houses filled with bright flowers, he came across a very sufficient sign of past power, a firm old tower, the last of the battlements and walls of Saint-Pons. In the Middle Ages it must have been a city of rank. Hidden away among

the mountains, it may have been difficult of access; perhaps its walls were doubly strong; however these things may be, Pope John XXII created it a Bishopric in 1317, and an Abbey of the XII century was converted into a Cathedral. The effect of this good building has been debased by a banal XVIII century façade, which, from its very position in the Cathedral-scheme, is first to meet the eye—with depressing effect. The interior of the church is good, but not exceptional; it is large, light, and broadly arched, with old carved choir-stalls and an altar-screen of finely wrought iron. Neither inside the Cathedral nor outside is there any great workmanship, and the only part which appeals to the traveller is the old, worn south side and its tower, quaintly simple—a bit of true, if not renowned, architecture, to which time has lent honour and dignity.

If it is interesting to know why a town has risen, it is doubly so to know why it should have declined; and many causes have led to the decay of Saint-Pons. In 1627 it threw in its fortunes with the ambitious de Rohan, and when Louis XIII defeated him and punishment was meted out to Languedoc, the walls of Saint-Pons were levelled. This great political blow was followed by a loss of churchly prestige, when the Revolution of '89 suppressed the Bishopric; and Napoleon, in his economical Concordat of 1801, did not restore its episcopal rank. Our own days have not been kinder to the little town; people and inventions have passed on to neighbouring cities, and Saint-Pons lies in the narrow cleft of its mountains, forgotten of the world.



"ITS WORN SOUTH SIDE AND ITS TOWER, QUAINTLY SIMPLE."—
SAINT-PONS.

Vabres.

As the one daily express train from Paris to Béziers gently hurried southward, the traveller had much time to meditate—why Vabres was so unknown a Cathedral. At Tournemire, where he sat for half an hour in a "connecting" train, he wondered still more; and when the train finally started for Saint-Affrique, meandering along with much of the swaying deliberation of an old stage-coach, he had time for further speculation and a rehearsal of his knowledge of Vabres, that Abbey of Notre-Dame raised by the prolific creator of French Bishoprics, John XXII, to the dignity of a Cathedral, re-built in the century of its elevation, partly destroyed two hundred years later, degraded from its episcopal estate in the revolutionary days of the 1790's, and doomed to architectural mediocrity by the repeated restorations of the XVII and XVIII centuries.

The train crept up gradually around the hill-sides, through mile after mile of uncultivated land. Under the hot sky of the Midi the earth was dry and stony, grown over with brush and scraggy trees; low, yellow hills rose in uninterrupted monotony; and except a snake curled in the sun, and little lizards running in and out among the stones, these "bad lands" seemed to be without inhabitants. After a ten mile ride, which was accomplished in scarcely less than an hour, the train came to a stand-still before the station of Saint-Affrique.

The traveller descended and looked about him for some method of conveyance to Vabres, still more than two miles away. Half a dozen battered stage-coaches stood about the

exit, with half a dozen men howling the destination of each. No one cried "Vabres."

For a moment, the traveller was daunted. He remembered that there were at least four towns of the name in France and that no living creature of his acquaintance or ken had ever seen the little episcopal village. An Abbé, high in the councils of a neighbouring archdiocese, and wise with the details of ecclesiastical knowledge, had been able to give no further information than the far-distant date of the Cathedral's creation.

An English speaking author, whose book had wiled away many an hour for the traveller, spoke in terms so vague of this Church of Saint-Sauveur that the traveller had long entertained the secret conviction that that cautious writer had never been to Vabres. Another English writing authority, in his valuable enumeration of French Cathedrals, makes no mention of the church. And, descending even to "guides," Baedeker knows it not, and the discursive Joanne gives it mere notice.

These discouraging memories rising together in the traveller's mind, he stood for a moment, silent, amidst the howling chorus. Surely the town of a former Cathedral would deserve a passing call from a driver whose route lay through its streets. Or was it perhaps—since every one seemed careless of its existence—a mythical church, or like Eauze, so totally destroyed that not one stone remained? Or was it perhaps another Vabres he was seeking, in another department? The traveller could stand it no longer, and he raised his voice in question. Immediately two of the drivers

stepped forward. Both were going in the "direction indicated by Monsieur," one "immediately," one "presently with freight." "Monsieur" chose the one which went "immediately." The value of everything is relative, and the traveller has never discovered that of the word "presently" in Saint-Affrique. But "immediately" means within the hour. His driver, a big, burly old man with fierce white mustachios, had to discuss with the other drivers, in hoarse whispers, why "Monsieur" wanted to go to Vabres. When at last they started down the avenue in the town, there was a white cotton parasol of wonderful dimensions to be bought for a young lady in the country, a can of "pétrole" for some house-wife, a whip, a broom, a hat, and each of these commissions entailed the amenities of life, jokes, compliments, weather forecasts—and time.

Finally the purchases were packed away in the coach's capacious old top, the last bon mot shouted to a blacksmith at the town's edge, houses grew scattered, people were off in the fields, and the driver, perforce, settled himself to his business of driving. Every now and again, he glanced quizzically at the traveller, but French courtesy prevailed over the devouring curiosity of natural man, and it was only after he had drawn up at the bridge of Vabres that he allowed himself to say, "Ten sous, Monsieur. And is Monsieur a native of this village?" "Monsieur" was not. "He doubtless, then, has relatives there?" "Monsieur" shook his head and handed up his fare. And he was amply avenged for his hour of waiting, for French courtesy again prevailed and the driver started off reluctantly, smilingly,

hat in hand, but muttering meditatively to himself the most rolling of "Sa-cr-rrés-tonner-rr-rr-rres."

Left standing by the bridge of Vabres, the traveller looked about him for a town. A few houses stood along the road, a cross, and a statue of "Mary Immaculate, who saved us from the pest." This seemed the fitting entrance to a town, and the traveller ventured gaily in.

Vabres is described in an encyclopædia as a town of "thirteen hundred inhabitants," to which should be added tens of thousands of fleas, hundreds of thousands of flies, and a proportionate representation of all kindred animals. The streets were narrow, bordered by uninteresting old houses. As pig-styes they would not have been well-kept; and each of the inhabitants, who sat outside, breathing the fresh odours of the street, seemed surrounded by a halo of insects. Never in all cleanly France had the traveller met such horrid dirt as in this old Cathedral town of Aveyron, never in the dirtiest corners of Europe had he seen more content amid filth.

A few hundred weary steps brought him to the Cathedral, a clean and newly-restored building which was in most violent contrast to its surroundings. As it was neither beautiful nor interesting, it mattered very little that houses hemmed it about. Straight side walls, a straight wall at the apse-end, a new and commonplace tower, it might almost have been the prim church of some New England village. Only the façade had a few poor traces of a former and grander state, the trace of the graceful arch of a true portal behind the angular XVIII century door, and above this door, two worn old escutcheons. In the interior, a



"THE TRACE OF A GRACEFUL ARCH ABOVE AN ANGULAR XVIII DOOR."—VABRES.

gaudy altar of the epoch of the "roi soleil," stands flauntingly where a simpler, truer altar must once have stood. The single nave and its side-chapels are neatly whitewashed, and painted in imitation of the stone which lays beneath; and everything—walls, benches, chapels, cheap new stained-glass windows,—is in a state of cleanliness which must in-



"THE CATHEDRAL, A CLEAN AND NEWLY-RESTORED BUILDING."—VABRES.

deed be next to godliness, and a state of "restoration" which takes from the church all the character which it might have preserved. The room is quite spacious; but the only sign of its vanished splendour is the pulpit, plain and unbeautiful, but with the Cope, the Crozier, the Sceptre, and above them all, the great Episcopal Crown carved in its dark wood.

The traveller did not linger long in this place of shadowy greatness; he gladly left the town behind, and, as he walked

in the softening twilight toward Saint-Affrique, he recovered his serenity and mused more philosophically,—if Vabres



"THE ONLY SIGN OF ITS VANISHED SPLENDOUR IS THE PULPIT."—VABRES.

were a cleaner town in olden days, or if, in streets filled with dirt, mouldy straw, and odours, solemn churchly pageants had once bent their way to Saint-Sauveur. Had Bishops

trailed their pompous robes of silk and cloth of gold along those dirty ways? He wondered whether churchly lords had endured to take up residence in such a Vabres as he had seen. And if they had not, he thought their sin in heaven's sight must seem far less than that of other worldly prelates who had neglected cleaner and less pestilential charges for the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.

Saint-Papoul.

The traveller was staying in Castelnaudary, a big, quiet country-town on the Aude. He had been in the streets where Simon de Montfort had walked when he held the city and plotted the capture of Toulouse; he had looked out over the country through which the Black Prince had marched to surround and storm Castelnaudary in 1355; and as the morning advanced, he decided to visit the ancient village of Saint-Papoul.

The guide-book said that there was to be found an "historic monument," a Cathedral, formerly an Abbey-church, with a "fine Romanesque choir, and a Cloister with elegant columns and Gothic capitals." To the traveller, who had first read the description far from the regions of Saint-Papoul, this had seemed clear and suggestive. But at Castelnaudary, he suddenly realised that he had not been told how to find "the fine Romanesque choir" and the elegantly columned Cloister. The large, learned time-table made no mention of Saint-Papoul, and it was not to be found on the map. He turned to his inn-keeper.

"Yes—oh yes. Certainly nothing was easier,—Monsieur

could go to Saint-Papoul. To walk? Well,—it was a matter of fourteen kilometres and a hot day. There would be no stage till to-morrow, but—" the inn-keeper's face brightened, "perhaps Monsieur would take a carriage?"

They both went to a near-by stable and inspected an ancient vehicle suggestive of the solemnities of life, of marriages and funerals, it was in fact so much a coach of state that the traveller felt it would be unbecoming to take it on a pleasure jaunt.

"It is very fine," said the inn-keeper, with outstretched palms.

"Very fine," echoed the traveller, dreading to lose himself in its capacious and lonely depths, yet longing to see the "elegant Gothic columns." At length he had a consoling idea—"Was there a good horse in the stable?" There was; and half an hour later, he was riding out of the town.

It was a lovely Sunday morning, and it seemed as if all the works of "the good God" were praising His Name in right cheerful voice. The country was rolling and prosperous, the sunlit fields were filled with growing grain, the roads were finely kept, and all the farms in well-turned order. A few carts, filled with smiling families, passed on their way to High Mass at Castelnaudary; a few men who were walking gave the traveller a polite "good-day;"—it was a French Sunday, and everybody was happy, and the traveller forgot for awhile the tragic history of this smiling valley.

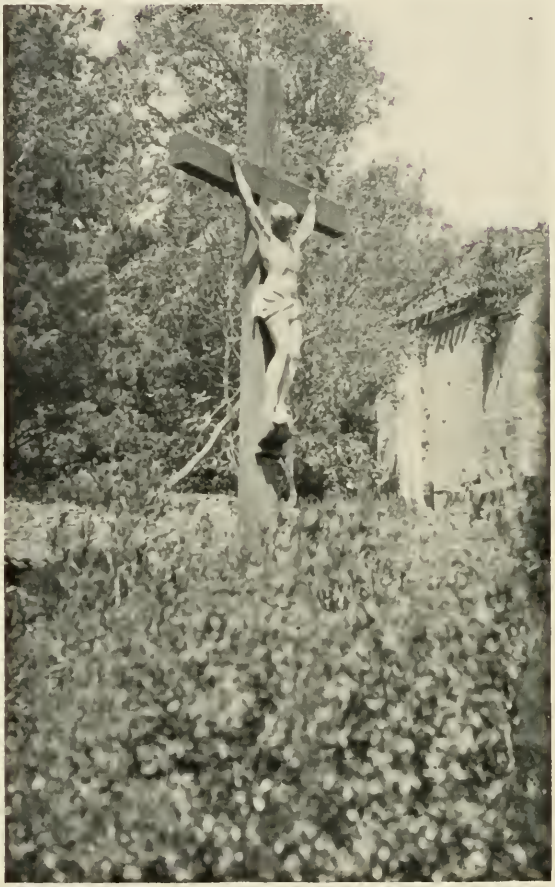
He drew rein at Saint-Papoul just as the little procession of priests and people were crossing the open square toward a low portal, doubtless the entrance of the church. As he



"THE STUCCO HAS FALLEN FROM ITS GRACEFUL COLUMNS, AND SHOWS THEIR SLENDER FOUNDATION-SHAFTS OF BRICK."—SAINT-PAPOUL.

stopped his horse and waited for them to pass in, he thought it a sad pity that such pretty, harmless old customs should be stopped by a new and unsympathetic government. There, at the head of all, was the heavy Crucifix, under whose weight a small boy proudly staggered; then came the dignified Curé, the wise, hard-working Curé of the country in France; then his young Abbé, and the little choir-boys distracted by the traveller and his horse, and lastly, in comfortably straggling order, the "flock." They passed under the gate-way, singing; and the traveller rode on to leave his horse with a friend of his host. Then he too came across the square and passed through the gate—into a Cloister. It was an old Cloister, sunny and warm with cheerful age. Its arches were prettily but not grandly curved, the carved capitals were worn, the stucco had fallen from its graceful double columns, and showed their slender foundation shafts of brick. It was a peaceful Cloister, charming in its atmosphere, not great in architectural merit. Out in the little enclosure, flowers and trees and plants grew in happy luxuriance, and on the cloister-cross hung a tender, loving, pitiful Christ. The traveller sat leaning against the columns, resting and listening to the "Sunday sounds." All sorts of little insects were buzzing and humming in the grass, and through the open door came the noise of moving chairs, of the Curé's deep chant, the shrill antiphon of the boys led by a man's beautiful mellow voice, and the wheeze and groans of an old organ. Suddenly the traveller became aware that this venerable instrument was being played with unusually fine feeling, and he tiptoed into the church;—trying

vainly to see the organist and the young man with the beautiful voice.



"ON THE CLOISTER-CROSS HUNG A TENDER, PITIFUL CHRIST."—SAINT-PAPOUL.

The interior of Saint-Papoul is a small room without aisles or transepts. The Romanesque choir is of the XII century, the nave of the XIII, and there is much later decora-

tion of a poor, gaudy kind. It is a simple country church, without distinction, not as pleasing as its Cloisters; and one wonders that in its long life as a Cathedral, from 1317 to 1801, not one of its Bishops tried to re-build or enlarge it in consonance with their episcopal rank, as Bishops were so wont to do.

As soon as Mass was over and the congregation gone, the traveller went back to find the camera he had left in the Cloister, and met the young Abbé, who was hurrying back.

"Ah Monsieur," he said breathlessly, "I hope you will pardon me, but I observed you in the church, and I saw your camera out here, and I thought I might perhaps be of service to you."

The Abbé stood straight and thin in his black cassock, scarcely more than a boy. His courteous manner was charming, and the traveller was delighted to see Saint-Papoul under his protection; for he persuaded several prayerful old women to postpone their oraisons until his guest had gotten an undisturbed view of the choir, he enabled him to take a view of the finely preserved tomb of a former Bishop, followed him into the Cloister, mildly sceptical of the success of pictures taken "so easily," and finally they went to the rectory to get an "ensemble" of the church from the study window. At the door of the large, fine house on the open square, the most dainty of little white-haired ladies was waiting to usher them upstairs.

"Pardon this room, I beg you, Monsieur," she said with a little shrug, as they went into the study, "but what will you

have! My son the Abbé is a great clutterer of papers, and my other son, who teaches in the communal school, is too busy with his books to bring me a daughter-in-law."

The room, "which we selected that my son might always



"THE FINELY PRESERVED TOMB OF A FORMER BISHOP."— SAINT-PAPOUL.

see his church," was immaculate, with an interesting sprinkling of papers, a flute, and some music.

"Your son plays," said the traveller, and at that moment the Abbé walked into the room laden with a plate of fruit, little glasses, and an old green bottle of home-made liqueur. At the stranger's words he had blushed like a girl.

"It is his pleasure," said the Mother, clearing an end of the table.

"I really know little about it," the Abbé added quickly; and light suddenly dawned on the traveller's mind.

"You played at Mass this morning and sang the antiphons," he said.

"If you call it playing,—yes. I pound, the organ puffs, and the effect must grate on the patience of even the good God."

And so they talked in the cheerful room for over an hour. He saw the family pictures, the Abbé as a child, as a small boy, as a student, and in his first priestly garb,—twenty-two years old. He saw the school-room of the brother, with its white walls and big maps, and he heard of the useful lives of which their mother is so justly proud. At last he rose to go, and asked if they would like to have copies of the photographs they had so kindly enabled him to take.

"Oh," said the little Mother, "Monsieur is too good."

"Another promised us some several years ago,—but they never came."

"Shame on you, my son," reproved the little Mother, "perhaps he had no success;—perhaps even he may have died, the poor man."

"Perhaps, perhaps," the young Abbé smiled.

Madame led the guest to the door, and pressed into his willing hands a bag of her delicious plums, and the Abbé walked with him to find the horse. Long after the traveller had mounted, the young priest held the bridle; and they talked of the troubled Church of France, "for whom we

Abbés can only pray and work our little part," of old Saint-Papoul and its people, and of the great world beyond; and



"THE CATHEDRAL OF OLD SAINT-PAPOUL."

when they parted, the younger man expressed what the older one felt.

"God keep you, Monsieur! I wish that we might meet again."

Alet.

Toward the middle of the short course of the river Aude, at the foot of the first low hills of the Pyrenees, lies the small, pleasant village of Alet. There can be no valley more charming, "the garden of the Aude," and no hills are more green and gracious than those which protect it from the icy winds of the North. To Alet, in early Christian centuries, came the missionaries; and here came also a Community of Benedictine monks, who, with their founder's precepts fresh in their hearts, began to fulfil the two great duties of their Order, the preaching of the Gospel and the sanctification of manual labour. They taught, built, exhorted, copied sacred and liturgical books for the brothers of other monasteries, and brought their "moustier" to so great a renown that, in the VIII century, the Superiors, who were Abbots with cross and mitre, became Lords of Alet; and local history attests that the city belonged to them alone and never to any noble family. By a Charter of 813, the Abbey was placed under the direct protection of the Church of Saint Peter and of Pope Leo III and his successors, and was pledged to give, every third year, in perpetuity, a pound of silver to the Church at Rome.

Threatened by the terrible Saracen in 796, the care of the city devolved upon the good monks of Alet, who re-built the ramparts and fortified it until it resembled a castle surrounded by high walls and crenellated towers. Within, however, were all the evidences of holy occupation, elegant porticos, Cloisters, charming gardens, an atrium, a chapter house, a hospice for pilgrims, a school, a private oratory,

and the Abbey-church which was the centre of the life and the glory of the Monastery.

Of the earliest building or buildings, little is known. In 1018, parts of what are now ruins were re-built with débris which the Infidel had left. The monks were their own architects; and one who has spent all his maturity within four walls will know the numberless little changes, the plannings, the improvements, which go to perfect the beloved house. Thus it was with this House of God. A hundred and fifty years went by before the Abbey-church was complete, before the columns of its nave, its windows, and its arches had received the last, lingering touches of the chisel; and then, it was accounted one of the most beautiful among the Romanesque monuments of the Midi. Another hundred and fifty years had scarcely passed before monkish pride was no longer content with the beautiful round-arched church. For in the XIII century a new fashion in architecture appeared, which became almost universal, to build an ambulatory about the choir, "that the Faithful might circulate in the temple without disturbing the ceremonies at the High Altar, and have access to the secondary chapels which were grouped about it." The Abbey-church must be all that any other church could be; and in the XIV century the Gothic apse was begun.

It was about this time that Pope John XXII was busily re-arranging the ecclesiastical map of the South. The church of Toulouse was taken from the diocese of Narbonne and created an Archbishopric; and, as an indemnity, the Pope raised Saint-Martin of Limoux, near neighbour of



"THE RUINED NAVE."—ALET.

Alet, to the rank of Cathedral, and named the Abbé Durand as the new Bishop. A controversy immediately arose which filled with excitement every monastery, rectory, and indeed every good Catholic home in the valley of the Aude. For the nuns of Limoux, although they had renounced the world, could not bring themselves to renounce the handsome revenues of Saint-Martin's pence which they had been enjoying for over a hundred years, and which would now revert to the new Bishop. They addressed the Archbishop of Narbonne, who appealed to Avignon; and after days of anxious waiting, the Bull was revoked. The next year, to compensate Narbonne for this suppression of Limoux, the Pope established two new Bishoprics,—Saint-Pons and Alet. On the first of March, 1318, the Benedictine Abbot left his cell to mount the episcopal throne, his church became a Cathedral, and he was the head of eighty parishes.

At this epoch the Albigensian struggles were past and had ended with the triumph of the Church; but the Huguenot heresy was looming big on the horizon, and if Alet were not the first to suffer, she was among those who suffered most sorely. From a first surprise, when the Catholics retired to a fortified mill, there was a quick rally. But the enemy was strong in the country. For a time, they came out of their fortresses only to burn farms, seize cattle, kidnap inhabitants for ransom, and destroy crops. Then, on the sixth of January, 1577, a second attack was made, the Catholics fled to caves in the mountains and the Huguenots were for ten years masters in Alet. When they were finally

dislodged, the city had to be almost re-built. The Cathedral and the episcopal Palace were in ruins, the ecclesiastical wealth dissipated, the altars overturned, and the Bishops hidden in their château of Cornauel. In discouragement, they abandoned Notre-Dame and converted the long, low-roofed refectory of the monastery into a church, which, consecrated under the name of Saint-Benoît, became the new, the last Cathedral of Alet.

Some years later, when prosperity was returning, Cardinal Richelieu appointed to this See a Bishop who was a celebrated preacher, noted for both the purity and the asceticism of his life, and whom Saint-Vincent-de-Paul enthusiastically called "his right arm." Unfortunately it was soon discovered that Monseigneur Pavillon's doctrinal orthodoxy was not above suspicion. After coming to his new charge, he dispensed with the services of the "Missionaries of Monsieur Vincent" and with those of many Sulpician priests who had been long settled in the diocese. Jesuits, "distinguished for the purity of their faith and their devotion to the Holy See," were dismissed by him as "too lax in their morals." A Ritual in French, which he introduced for the use of his parishioners, if not written by his friend, the celebrated doctor Arnaud, was certainly reviewed and corrected by him, and Clement IX condemned it utterly. The Bishop also established schools unconnected with the orthodox channel of church education, the great teaching Orders. He spread ideas, considered pernicious, which tended to confuse the souls of the Faithful, and which are even now said to lurk lingeringly in the South, only too prone to doctrinal wander-

ings. And although, for the thirty-nine years of his episcopate, he defended Alet against the temporal exactions of Louis XIV, although shortly before his death he protested "before God and men" his allegiance to the Holy See, although he published, as was his bounden duty, the Bull of Innocent X which condemned the five propositions of Jansen, he was accused, with much show of reason, both of Gallicanism and of Jansenism, and his episcopate was distinguished by independence if not by rebellion. From the view-point of the Church, whose ideal of submission and unquestioning allegiance is most necessary to its order and being, he was almost an ecclesiastical culprit.

Monseigneur Pavillon's memoirs would more properly belong to the theological history of the South, were it not that it is owing to his Jansenistic austerity that the Cathedral-church of Notre-Dame was not restored. When he was told that for thirty thousand livres it could be rebuilt in all its ancient glory, he replied simply that the "poor must first be considered,"—and went his way. Later prelates made practical restorations to the Refectory-Cathedral and to the episcopal Palace, but the noble church near-by was allowed to lay in ruins and to crumble away. The chapels which were not entirely destroyed by the Huguenots gradually decayed; parts of the Gothic apse are supposed to have been demolished to make way for the high-road of 1770; much of its falling stone was appropriated for house-building and road-mending; and in 1830, much more was taken for the aqueduct of the Théron. The Cathedral of Saint-Benoît was even more unfortunate. The last in France to be closed by

the Revolution of '89, it was then sold, and except the sanctuary and the sacristy, torn down.

Entering the little valley of Alet in search of these ruins, the traveller first saw looming in the distance the wall of a tower, the last reminder of the two which formerly stood at the



"THE FINE, ROUND PORTAL IS STILL ITS ENTRANCE."—ALET.

foot of the Cathedral symbolising the nails in the feet of Christ. Coming down the main street, which is now but a country road, he stopped to look at the gaunt ruins of the Gothic apse above a vine-covered wall. Behind it lay the greater ruins. The pretty parish Church of Saint-André stood near-by, and crossing its vestibule he found the door

that led to all which now remains of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. The traveller opened it and saw the cemetery which now surrounds the ruins, he looked into the quiet yard where young spring grass was pushing everywhere above the graves and at the old walls where vines had crept and weeds had grown. Not a sound reached him except the twittering of birds. The sun was shining everywhere, on crosses and on glistening bead wreaths, and in every corner of the great, ruined, vaultless nave.

The pillars of this nave and its three aisles have long since disappeared, the flooring has been for centuries under ground, and the earth is piled for many feet above it in uneven, grass-covered knolls. The lofty walls still enclose the nave, and the fine, round portal is still its entrance, but the walls are broken and there are now no doors, while beautiful frames encircle gaping windows whose glass is gone. There are suggestions of old mural paintings, a heavenly scene, probably a Coronation of the Virgin; a Benedictine monk; a bird drinking from a large chalice; but all are defaced and faded. The architectural form of the church was most pleasing, not very large, but high and dignified, and the pure Romanesque motifs were of great beauty and most unusual richness. The round window—precursor of the rose—the curved window, the door's full arch, all were decorated with some carved design that ravished the eye. And the blue sky, which is now the church's only vault, the grass and weeds peeping between the loosened stone, all seemed to make these charming forms more touchingly beautiful. Yet it is not the nave, but the little Romanesque sanctuary that

is accounted the most interesting part of the Cathedral. Local tradition, which if seldom exact, is never without value, says that this was the site of the pagan Temple of Alet: that the foundations, substructure, and arcades of Gallo-Roman style, and in fact all the interior of this little sanctuary, belonged to the fanum of Diana, and that, later, they were adapted to the exigencies of the Catholic cult. In the East such places of idolatrous worship were often destroyed: but in the West they were closed, or after purification by suitable religious ceremonies, converted into Christian churches. The most lofty sanction was given to this custom. At Rome, the vast Church of the Ara-Cœli was built on the summit of the Capitoline Hill and the remains of the Temple of Jupiter were mingled with its orthodox, mediæval stones. Pope Boniface himself opened the Pantheon and re-dedicated it to Our Lady and all the Holy Martyrs; and these celebrated examples were followed at Fréjus and Riez where the columns of the Baptisteries were taken from pagan buildings. The little semi-circle of the old Sanctuary of Alet, pierced with windows, decorated with frescoes, with vault of cemented stone, and Corinthian columns, has been subjected to much change at monkish hands, and the two fine columns with capitals of acanthus leaves, which stand at its entrance, are certainly the work of the good brothers of the XI century. But, whether partly built by pagan hands or entirely by Christian, the rounded niche reproduces the form and original spirit of an antique Fanum and brought to the musing traveller's mind fancies of Diana Augusta, divine protectress of wooded heights and solitary dales, who was honoured in



"THE LITTLE ROMANESQUE SANCTUARY IS ACCOUNTED THE MOST INTERESTING PART."—ALET.

this retired, forest-crowned valley. For Alet was the ancient Electa, the "chosen," the "privileged place" of the Romans. They delighted in its climate and in its mineral springs; and vaulted chambers still exist which formed part of their Baths.

Such are the beautiful ruins of the two Cathedrals of Alet. A few walls, an arch, a bit of ruined room, the exquisite ivory statue of the Virgin, a gift of Catherine de Médecis that is now reverently kept in the Treasury of the parish church, and the great walls of the Cathedral itself, these are the only relics of an Abbey whose complicated plans could scarcely be accurately remembered or re-drawn to-day and whose possessions and power were enormous. The ruins seem beyond repair; picturesque, but melancholy. And every year on Corpus Christi Day, the Faithful march about the desolate walls and priests elevate the Holy Sacrament where it used to be exposed on the High Altar; and on the Feast of the Assumption, they carry here in solemn procession the miraculous statue of Our Lady, that the processions which Bishop and Chapter formerly made on that day in the Cathedral may ever live in the memory and reverence of the people.

The South is not without Cathedrals which would be greatly improved by trailing vines and open sky, and rains to wash away their paint and gilt. But Notre-Dame is not of these. It is reminiscent of the fine, strong art of Lescar's piers and capitals, and of all great works which have suffered from mad, destructive desecrations, of all churches which the Huguenots delightedly destroyed, none is more lovely in its decay, none speaks more eloquently of the glories that used to be, than this old Cathedral by the Aude.

Rieux.

The stage-coach, which still flourishes in the country about Toulouse, travels every morning between the old "bastide" of Carbonne and the Mas d'Azil, and the driver, looking down on the ties which have been placed along the road-side, no longer cracked his whip in pride, but in anger. And he muttered to himself: "Yes! Yes! I know thou art coming! Beast of a rail-road! Pig of a rail-road! Isn't a 'correspondence' good enough for any one! Isn't it too good for the people of this country!"

"Monsieur," he turned to the traveller who sat beside him, "I have lived thirty years on this earth, I have travelled in trains, to Toulouse and Paris. What did I do in a box of a car? Stifle! What did I see out of a square of a window? Just a little more than nothing! I tell you truly, Monsieur, I learn more in ten kilometres riding on the top of this coach of mine than in a hundred by the train. I breathe—I have the sky above me—enfin, I live!—" There was silence for a few moments. Then the driver made a great outward sweep with his whip, and his young, bronzed face glowed. "Isn't this a country, Monsieur? Is there any country like it? Air, hills, trees, nice houses, or a farm if you will, and everything to eat! Are you tired of lamb? Take a chicken! Or have you had too many chickens? Fish a little in the river, and," he smacked his lips heartily, "fruit, Monsieur! Salad, vegetables, and wine! Oh—the wine! When I go home at night to my wife and a pot of soup and bread, I can drink a bottle-full without trying." To the continued accompaniment of these patriotic encomiums, the coach jogged on.

The country-side was indeed charming, the round towers and pointed roofs of the southern farm-houses rising in the midst of the fields, a pleasant sun, the trees waving in a cool breeze, and the low hills all about, with here and there the glimpse of a little village—and the hour's drive to Rieux was past all too soon.



"THE BRIDGE."—RIEUX.

Drawing up before the bridge, the driver said, "Well, if you won't go with me to the Mas, you get down here; but another time Monsieur,—another time! And I will show you better things than this."

He whipped up and drove away, leaving the traveller in the quaintest little town in France. Its main street is the country

road; its little side streets, bye-ways; and all its houses are old and leaning, with low and over-hanging eaves or heavy, wooden beams, or some quaint oddity of patch or age. The swift Arize flows about the town as the sea surrounds a little cape; and at one extreme end, near the older bridge, is the Cathedral.

The Bishopric of Rieux was one of the many created in 1317, by the inscrutable will of John XXII. Suppressed in the Napoleonic re-organization of 1801, its large episcopal Palace and the charming gardens of the Bishops are all that remain to show that, although living in a small town, the prelates had the state and decorous luxury which was fitting to their rank. The ecclesiastical buildings cluster about the Cathedral-church. The Palace, belonging partly to the early days of the See, but generally to the XVIII century, is spacious and discreetly hidden behind high walls; the houses of the Canons are near-by, the ancient presbytery of the Curés is just opposite the church's portal, and from the charming, shaded gardens, where the Bishops used to walk, the apses and the beautiful brick tower come into their finest view.

The history of Notre-Dame has been a melancholy one. Its choir and transepts were built; then, in a moment of apparent discouragement, a solid well-finished wall was erected where the nave should have begun. In this "façade," a fine Gothic portal was cut; and with this false completion, further construction was abandoned. In the XVI century Huguenots desecrated the Cathedral; and having an especial detestation for all churchly statues and ornaments, they

stripped the interior, and left it bare and well-prepared for all the hideous twisted and painted columns and gilded altars which the next two centuries loved. In comparison with the body of the church, which is only the shallow space of the transepts, the choir and the altars and their poor ornaments of the XVII and XVIII centuries seem enormous, and, in its deformed proportions, the interior is insignificant. The portal, which the Huguenots left in a state of sad mutilation, has never been restored and under its fine arch, there are only hacked bits of carvings and the desolated niches which used to shelter Saints.



"THE ANCIENT PRESBYTERY OF THE CURÉS."— RIEUX.

With the exception of the tower, the church is without

architectural beauties. Planned ambitiously and in good form, its construction was obviously continued according to the necessities of times and treasuries.

From the Bishop's garden, the tall, central apse can be well seen, the most finished part of all the church, a smaller apse at its right, and on the other side, one so tiny that it seems merely an excrescence. Wooden roofing stretches curiously above the transepts; and, as was most proper, the Bishop had the finest of all views of the tower, his Cathedral's treasure. It is the arched and galleried tower of brick of the Toulousan country, which always has its charm. There is the round, fat tower at Lavaur, the Augustinian tower at Toulouse, and that of Lombez, but none except the lofty, lace-like tower of Pamiers can compare with this slim shaft of Rieux. Its base rises high and plain, strong as the butting, massive walls of Pamiers; but at Pamiers it is the power of a sturdy man-at-arms, while at Rieux, the strength is slender and full of grace like that of a famous matador. Above this line of strength is another storey with the arches of the lower stage still firm and closed, but a little further ornamented; and above this last defensive line, the soft tones of the reddish-pink brick become mixed with the greyish tints of the stone threads of a new decoration, and the last three stories rise openly arcaded, with fine, pointed windows; while over the last stage, great grinning gargoyles perch, and the tower is finished with a light and charming balcony.

Not less interesting than this view from the Bishop's gardens, is that from the old bridge, where the tower rises from behind the wooden roofs. Here the old Cathedral con-



"THE CATHEDRAL IS UNSURPASSED IN QUAINTNESS."—RIEUX.

tinued the ancient fortifications of the town; and its staunch brick walls and great moss-covered buttresses are still washed by the swiftly flowing river. Full of irregularities and little originalities, and theoretically quite incongruous, the church, with its vagaries of form and patched construction, is unsurpassed in quaintness. Although it is humble in comparison with the great ruins of Alet and the bold beauty of Albi, the Cathedral of Rieux is no less picturesque than they, and has its own unique, peculiar charm, unlike the charm of any other church in France.

Mirepoix. In spite of the inevitable struggles of Mediævalism, the country about Toulouse grew apace both politically and socially in the XIII century, and many villages and towns became communes with liberal charters. Some ruined by war were re-built; some were newly founded; and Mirepoix, destroyed by flood in 1289, immediately rose on its former site. Twenty-one years later, John XXII, the French Pope of Avignon, created its Bishopric, and Saint-Maurice became the Cathedral-church of the little city.

Mirepoix has scarcely outgrown the limits of her mediæval walls; and to-day, the arch-way of her old gate is an entrance to the narrow, regular streets of the town. The place is so tiny that it seems a toy,—a curious effect which other old cities, equally small, do not have, because their cobbled streets are so winding and confusingly tortuous that one may walk on and on, lose one's way, find it again, and, travelling over a little space, have the illusion of wandering afar. Mire-

poix, like other "bastides" of the period, was regularly planned. Her diminutive streets cross each other at right angles, and from one end of the town it is often possible to see the white road along the other side, and far away toward the horizon, across the plain of the Lhers, the distant, misty Pyrenees.

The town life is lived in the great central square. The upper stories of its surrounding houses project over the sidewalk and rest on staunch, wooden pillars; and there, under the arcades, are the shops and the cafés, the place of the numerous little round-topped tables where Frenchmen love to sip a liqueur and talk an hour away. In the open, is the market-place, and the covered hall where fixed measures stand waiting for the grain. And close by is the Church of Saint-Maurice.

It is not the Saint-Maurice of the episcopal elevation, but a more modern church, built in consonance with a recognised rank, a work of the comparatively recent XV and XVI centuries and principally of its Bishop, Philip de Lévis. Charmingly hidden by masses of green foliage, the size of this large church, so illy-proportioned to the toy town, is at first scarcely apparent; but on entering, one's impression is that in this cool, vast interior, the population of Mirepoix must be lost. The loftiness, the majesty of height, which seems so inherent a quality of French Cathedrals, both Romanesque and Gothic, is singularly absent in Saint-Maurice. The low, broad arch of the nave, which has just been completed, the absence of the breaking line of pillars, and the large width of sixty-five feet, give this room a great



"THE ARCHWAY OF THE OLD GATE."—MIREPOIX.

spaciousness, and produce in the worshipper that emotion of empty breadth which is felt in the midst of a large, open plain. A series of chapel-alcoves are on either side of the room, and seven others about the rounded choir, complete the original disposition of the church. One small portal,



"UNDER THE ARCADE."—MIREPOIX.

which opens on the square, is the church's only entrance. Another little door in the west wall, which led to the Bishop's Palace, is now walled up; and here, where the great western doors of a Cathedral should be, a little chapel has been formed for that most besieged of patrons, Saint-Antony of Padua.

These chapels, with the broadly vaulted roof and the unbroken nave, form a well-conceived and harmonious interior.

Its Gothic is simple; and if two of the chapels had not been divided into an upper and lower story, the lines of the nave would be unspoiled.

In accordance with the taste of the region, the whole interior has been coloured; but the Toulousan taste is happily not that of the Italian Renaissance; and far from being gilt and gaudy, this colouring is sombre, dark blues and darker reds and even yellows seem subdued. Neither does this produce the effect of a crypt-like nave, for Saint-Maurice is exceptionally well-lighted. In each of the many chapels is a Gothic window of different proportions and traceries; and in the nave, over the tip of each arch, is a rose. The upper windows of the choir are large, like the lower ones. Although the glass is not especially fine, the graceful form of the windows and their number are quite unique; and the interior, with its simple arrangement of a great space, would be very harmonious were it not for a beautiful High Altar which is nevertheless entirely inappropriate. Standing in the curve of the apse as a piece of statuary in the alcove of a museum, it is artistically foreign to its surroundings, and a sort of false ambulatory is formed which destroys the effect of the original plan. It is however in harmony with the religious idea of a catholic church, which ever recalls the eye of the worshipper to the High Altar. But the architectural plan of this Cathedral, with its many chapels, would seem to be polytheistic, with altars for the worship of the many; and to have, in its original conception, no place for the exaltation of the One.

The exterior of the church, hidden among the trees, is an

unusual and beautiful example of southern Gothic. The one portal opens on the simple porch-way of the north side, and there is no façade. But the apse and the side-walls are completed; and above the chapels, between each high Gothic window and each lovely rose, rises the wonder of this Pyrenean Cathedral,—the flying-buttress. It is only a single buttress, low and timidly flying,—but nevertheless it is the "marvel to which the builders of the Midi seldom put their hand." Over the arches of the apsidal chapels, instead of the lateral roses, the builder, with greater boldness, has placed these higher windows in a large, pointed gable of stone; and from the little turrets between the gables, buttresses fly with a broader sweep; and their gargoyles, although somewhat tamed in the kinder sun of the South, are akin to the fierce creations of the Isle-de-France.

The Gothic palace of Philip de Lévis, a fine old building too hidden by old houses, adjoins the Cathedral's western front; and the church ends fittingly, as so many of its neighbours, in a graceful tower. Buttressed against this tower is another one, small and round and ending in machicolations. But the most interesting of the two is the great tower, the model of many another in this South-land, two-storied, with open Gothic windows and a high tapering spire. This is the one which rises high above the Cathedral's trees, and heralds far across the plains that Mirepoix, once the home of "heretics," is now under its protection and the absolute supremacy of the Catholic Church, "one and indivisible."

IV.

MARITIME CATHEDRALS.

Maguelonne. Perhaps none of all by-gone cities has had more vicissitudes in its two thousand years of life than Maguelonne; and certainly none with so comparatively recent existence has proved more of a will-o'-the-wisp to modern tourists. Some, it is said, have wandered vainly about the environs of Montpellier and given up the search. Others have gone as far as the little port of Palavas, but finding the sun of a summer's day too hot, or the sea of a spring day too uncertain, have feared to take the boat ride which lay between them and Maguelonne. A writer of to-day has gone so far as to inform us that the Cathedral has disappeared and a modern village, called Villeneuve-les-Maguelonne, occupies the site of the ancient city and contains no trace of its former grandeur. The leisurely traveller must perhaps leave to the archæologist the discovery of fragments and ruins of the demolished city; but if he should first turn his back resolutely on Villeneuve-les-Maguelonne which has nothing in common with the older city except resemblance in name, he may yet see, stout and strong, in very stony fact, the ancient Cathedral. And if he would start luxuriously on this pilgrimage, let him take one of the easy, open, and perhaps rickety, little carriages with fringed linen awning for



ALONG THE ROAD TO MAGUELONNE.

top, which wait along the public squares of Montpellier, and drive the twelve or fourteen kilometres to Maguelonne.

Montpellier gradually disappears in the distance, and he drives along the smooth, white road, past a few quiet farms, entering a long avenue of beautiful lindens that grow on either side and overhang the road farther than eye can reach. The whole world seems shut out, and, as he jogs along more and more slowly in this pleasant shade, the traveller's mind wanders to the days when my Lord Bishop of Maguelonne rode in state over this same road to meet my Lord Count, temporal ruler of the neighbouring city; the days when he passed along in gorgeous cavalcade, oblivious of either shade or sun, conjuring how far a natural respect for his ecclesiastical authority, backed by the very material strength of the ancient walls and towers of Maguelonne, would weigh against the increasing prosperity and power of the rebellious and upstart city of Montpellier. The traveller pictured the Canons, waiting for their Bishop's return, anxiously pacing the cloister-walk, and, as if in response to his day-dreams, just as the end of the lindens was reached, the driver said, "There is the Cathedral, sir."

To the left is the narrow, canal-like Lez and a long sandy stretch; in front of him, quite distant, a few wooden cottages and the sea. "To the right, sir," says the driver again, and following his pointing whip the traveller dimly sees across a huge swamp, among a cluster of fruit-trees, a massive outline, dark against the southern sky—doubtless the Cathedral. They drive on, skirting past

Palavas. The delightful avenue of lindens is left behind and, along the white road, there is scarcely a tree to shade. As far as the eye can reach it is dazzled by sun and sand, by a vast, monotonous expanse of low-land, swamp, and sea. And as they still jog on, he tries to conjure before his vision the first Maguelonne, founded by adventurous Phocæan traders, a port as flourishing and renowned as Marseilles. In this waste, it seems impossible there ever was a city.



"AN OUTLINE, DARK AGAINST THE SOUTHERN SKY."—MAGUELONNE.

Neither can he picture the later Christian town destroyed by the Saracens; the Maguelonne which rose from its ashes, and unlike Langostalo, Glanum, and Elusa, regained its lost prestige. Coming down the years, he recalls when Pope Urban II, who came to France in 1095 to attend the Council of Clermont and preach the first crusade, landed at Maguelonne; and found a city so pleasing that he created it the "Port of Saint Peter," an honour which no other place

in France has ever had. Perhaps it was on such a calm, sunny day, over eight hundred years ago, that the papal fleet came in sight, and, looking out to sea, the traveller imagines the gradual approach of the caraval, the landing of the fiery Pontiff amid kneeling Bishops and priests in gorgeous vestments. He fancies the Pope's advance down the crowded streets, the altar-boys in cassocks of best lace who precede him and make the air sweet with incense from the gold censers they carry, and all along the way, on either side, the great mass of people, and at last, with open doors, the strong Cathedral which faces the sea.

This vision again disappears, for the carriage has stopped; and instead of a city the traveller finds himself in a sort of open court-yard near a stable and a farm store-house; no traces of an ancient ruined city—nothing but vineyards, fields, and the farm buildings, and, in a well laid out garden, the manor house and the Cathedral. For Maguelonne is now an estate. Its owner would seem to have incidentally acquired the Cathedral which stands in its midst. However, far from neglecting this unique possession, M. Fabrège has refused to sell it to the French government,—who wished to constitute it an official "historical monument,"—has himself had it judiciously restored, and still uses it for the celebration of an occasional Mass and as the burial-place of his family.

It stands at a little distance from the modern buildings—discreetly apart. No church could be more severely plain, none stronger. It seems, in its isolation, an embodiment of the "mighty fortress" of Luther's hymn, so solid, so sure

do its walls rise in this low land. It seems as if they had stood there for ages, and must stand for centuries to come—symbols of a strong faith. Of beauty they have nothing;



"THE SMALL WEST PORTAL WHICH IS THE PRINCIPAL DOORWAY."—MAGUELONNE.

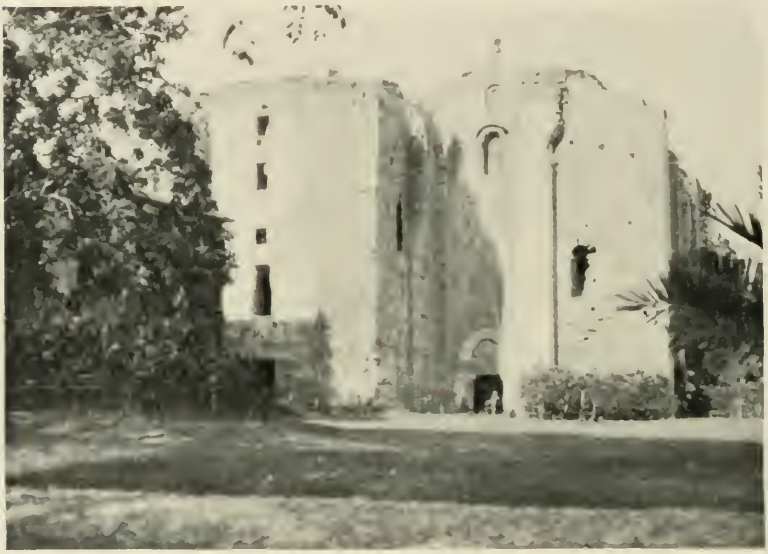
but much of a strange impressiveness, and, after the first glimpse, the modern surroundings are forgotten.

The form of the Cathedral has the general suggestion of a church but its style is purely military; there are no flying-

buttresses, no ornamented piers, none of the usual graces of ecclesiastical architecture. There are stout walls, heavy stone piers, and the narrow slit-windows, like those of castle strongholds, from which archers might conveniently shoot. It is in studying the exterior that one discovers how much of the structure has disappeared; through war, perhaps through vandalism, but above all, through the warp and wear of time. Here in the VIII century Charles Martel began a Cathedral, perhaps in gratitude that he had scourged the Saracens; here too, Bishop Arnaud built, three hundred years later; and his successors built still more,—a Cloister, chapels, and great monastical buildings. Everything except the main church is gone, and the traveller could find few traces of its former completeness. He took a sort of sad pleasure in discovering on the façade bits of arches which suggested Agde; in finding, as he walked on, the base of a massive tower, and in picturing the simple Cloister through which the Canons used to make their way to the church's upper gallery. The most curious part of the existing Cathedral is the small west portal which is the principal doorway and the only ornamented part of the exterior. Its plan is very simple. A broad stone lintel, carved in set design, rests on the foliated capitals of two columns, and above the lintel is a tympanum with the Symbols of the four Evangelists and Christ in the very usual attitude of Last Judgment. Below the lintel, two reliefs represent Saint Paul with his Sword and Saint Peter with the Keys of Heaven and Hell. The faces of the two Apostles are flat and unintelligent and unpleasantly like those of low-class Chinese;

and, in addition to the conventionality of all the subjects, the execution is particularly crude. Of course nothing is known of the mason-carver; but it may be safely supposed that he was of an older generation than the man who created the beautiful portals of Saint-Trophime of Arles.

In 1198 the Bishop of Maguelonne permitted Jews to



"THE FAÇADE OF THE OLD CATHEDRAL."—MAGUELONNE.

live in the city, allowed them to build a synagogue and to teach medicine; and, in return for these favours they agreed to furnish the Cathedral, on Christmas and Good-Friday, forty-eight pounds of wax candles. When the traveller entered the church he appreciated the wisdom of the Bishop's indulgence; for the only natural light comes through the



"THE WHOLE CATHEDRAL IS UNMISTAKABLY OF THE TIME WHEN THE CHURCH WAS A REFUGE FOR BODY AS WELL AS SOUL."—
MAGUELONNE.

narrow slits which serve as windows, and it is a dim light indeed. In a few moments, however, he could distinguish the tribune in the first two bays, and the tombs of former Bishops, who lay carved in effigy, near the altar. The moulding of piers and columns is severe and their capitals have only the meagre cutting of early Romanesque foliage. Even the two chapels of the choir, which are of later date, show no deviation from this great plainness, and the whole interior, the whole Cathedral, is unmistakably of the time when the infidel swarmed on the sea and the marauder infested the land, the time when the Church was a refuge for body as well as soul. Yet there is a dignity in the single aisle-less chamber, a repose in its simple Romanesque, and it would seem more truly the place of worship of a Disciple than the favoured church of the haughty Pope who made it a fief of his Holy See, a place of prayer rather than of the anathemas with which its walls resounded in Albigensian times.

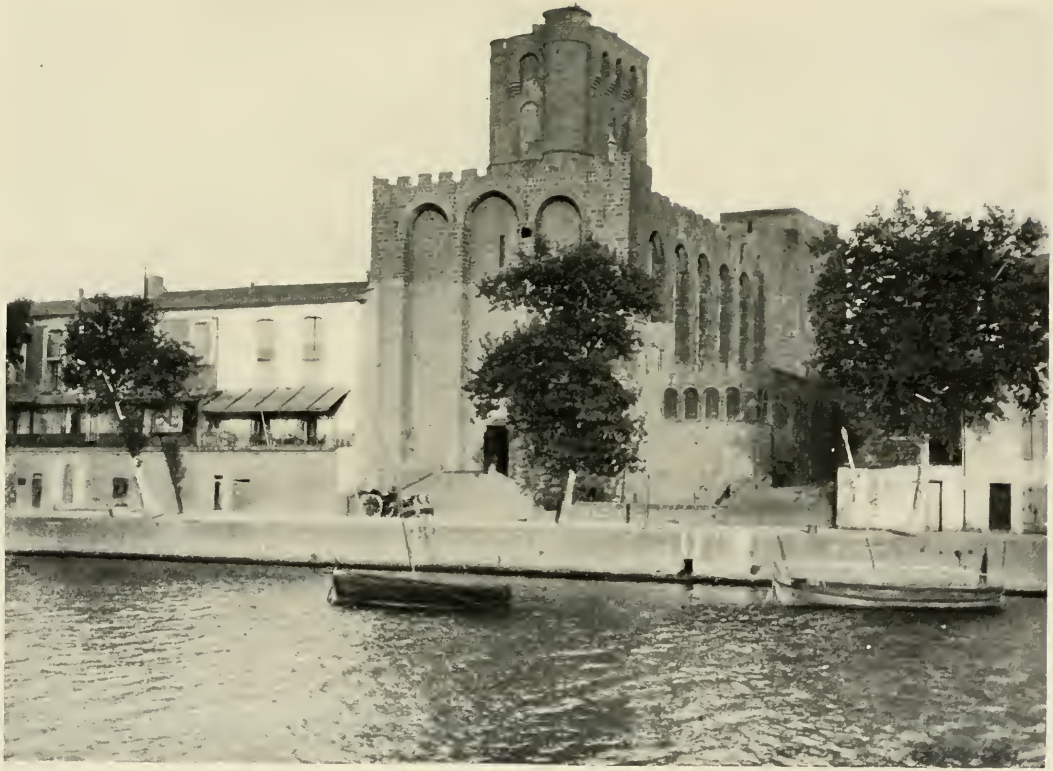
Once outside the Cathedral-door, the pretty paths, the flower-beds, and the country house—all that speaks of to-day —reappears, and old Maguelonne fades away. Perhaps some of its cloister-ruins lie under the very ground one treads; perhaps, as some say, traces of the city may still be found in the salt, oozy marsh which the Mediterranean floods; and the traveller himself may fancy Maguelonne, phantom-like, in some mirage of that mysterious sea. But as he drove away, his chief thoughts were those of gratitude that when Louis XIII and his iconoclastic Cardinal rased the walls and destroyed the city of Maguelonne, they spared

this old Cathedral of Saint-Pierre, which still stands, and which, through the care and courtesy of its owner, any traveller through the South-land may see in all its reality.

Agde.

It is useless, in the larger cities, to try to live over again the Middle Ages. Modern life is too insistent, and even the traveller has taken refuge in a truly mediæval stronghold—a church, a castle, or an old "hôtel,"—something, if only a trolley-gong, inevitably disturbs his fancies and illusions of the past. Some travellers look on all that has come to us from olden days as "sights" that must be "done," and to them the trolley-gong in the street and the electric light on the altar will never be out of place. But other travellers who like to wander about with imagination will grieve at all such modern "improvements." They will find Béziers grown too large and Toulouse too bustling, and they will take great delight in Agde.

Agde is the quietest of old towns on the smallest and most lazy of rivers. The tide comes in and the tide goes out far more frequently than the boats, and big fishing nets, stretched across the water's breadth, are once in a while slowly lowered and raised. This much can be seen from the inn-window, and it is apparently all the activity of the river's front. The town itself is old, the streets narrow and badly paved, and everything seems to tell of some day of long ago when the inhabitants stopped building and growing and adopted "Mañana" as their motto. Hundreds of years have passed since that day, and Agde, a city



"A MARITIME CHURCH IN ALL ITS PERFECTION."—AGDE.

in the Middle Ages, has become, in modern times, a little town. As one drives across the bridge which connects the railway station and the town, the Cathedral comes into full view, standing on the quay as if still guarding the approach of the river. It is a most perfect example of a maritime fortress-church of the XII century, and for some time, watching the heavy shadows of the sinking sun on its old walls, the traveller could not rid himself of the hallucination that it was a castle. At Maguelonne he had seen only the ruins of a Cathedral with suggestions of its former place and importance. Here he saw a maritime church in all its perfection and the town it protected, very much as it used to be when Agde was a busy port, the Toulon of the Middle Ages. The plan of the church is very simple; a rectangle, whose heavy walls are strengthened by regular, rounded arches. The top of the wall is crenellated; and the traveller recalled that from this part of the House of God, stones and hot oil were wont to be thrown on a presumably unrighteous foe. He remembered, too, that behind the crenellations, there is a pointed roof, but the walls rise above and hide it, and his eye wanders back to a tower. It is square, with the same rounded arches as the church, a veritable donjon-keep. The whole Cathedral proclaims its Lord a "God of Hosts and of Battles."

In looking at this church one experiences a quite peculiar feeling of satisfaction and pleasure. Not one stone has been placed for ornament, and in the builder's mind there was apparently no thought except for the obvious, utilitarian character of his Cathedral. Yet, in his achievement there is

a wonderful and subtle perfection of plan which makes it the ideal of a stern, mediæval fortress. Simplicity is the basis of its style. For, while grimness is well illustrated in the dark brown of the heavy, basaltic stone, severity,



"THE FIRST FEELING ON ENTERING IS DISAPPOINTMENT."—AGDE.

which is akin to grimness, speaks in every line. Mediæval castles and fortresses there are in number, but the traveller could recall none which have so perfect a harmony in all their proportions as this maritime Cathedral, and in his

heart he rendered homage to the genius of the unknown builder of Agde.

The interior of the Cathedral is without the harmony of its exterior, and the first feeling on entering the church is disappointment. This is not so much the fault of the original plan as of the ornamental additions, each more incongruous than the other. By an effort of imagination one can sweep away the hideous XVIII century altar and the disfiguring wainscot and see the interior as the builder must have seen it. Like Maguelonne, Agde is a single, aisle-less hall; and, although this chamber is not impressive, its height and narrow length give it a very beautiful, simple dignity. The walls have regular, plain arches, the roof is tunnel-vaulted, and the narrow windows give the same faint light as those of Maguelonne. It is, however, not the simple interior of this Cathedral which charms. It is the exterior which, although small, has a sternness, a strength, and a mystery that hold the traveller in wondering fascination and make him long to know all the story of its ancient days of glory, adventure, and strife.

Elne.

Perched on a hill, high above the sea, stands Elne, now a small town of less than four thousand inhabitants; historically one of the oldest "cities" in France. She was an important stronghold more than two thousand years ago when Hannibal encamped under her first, long-crumbled walls. Centuries later, the great Constantine re-named the city Helena, in honor of his mother, and here, in the year 350 A.D., the

emperor Constantius was assassinated. Of all the Mediterranean cities visited by the desolations of war, Elne seems to have been the most unfortunate. She was once destroyed by the Moors, once by the Normans, and twice by the Kings of France. Like Maguelonne, she was deprived of her Bishopric in favour of a more successful rival; and the wonder is that she still lives—a poor country town—to remind us of her long tale of woes and her notable antiquity. Elne is not in Languedoc. She is the city of a disputed country, Rousillon; a little border state between France and Spain. These restless and powerful neighbours coveted her greatly, and each tried his best to lay her waste when she was held by the other. At last France conquered, and the Cathedral of Elne was numbered among the French, and not among the Spanish Cathedrals. This is architecturally, as well as actually, its proper place, for, although begun under Spanish dominion, the Cathedral is near akin to those of the "Midi." Not only is its situation unique, but it is equally original in its development of the common style, and, like all fortress-churches of the sea, it has a peculiar fascination.

The town it protected lies along the side of a hill, the Cathedral at the top looks out over miles of country,—the dark Pyrenees and a great sweep of ever-changing sky and sea. Formerly the Mediterranean washed the foot of the hill, but in late centuries the waters have receded and, between Elne and the sea, there are now two or three miles of lowlands. As the traveller stood on the cathedral terrace, he tried to realise the church in the by-gone days of its

glory, and to imagine below him the summer's lapping and the winter's beating of the sea.

Toward this sea, the Cathedral presents the plain, heavy walls of its apse; the battlements and towers of the façade frown darkly inland; for the city was menaced seaward



"THE PLAIN, HEAVY WALLS OF THE APSE."— ELNE.

by the roving marauders of the Mediterranean, and infidels and warring Christians, in turn, attacked it by land. The church's exterior is therefore bruised, injured by war and time, patched together in places, and re-built, piecemeal, by men of different minds. Each attack made some repair imperative, and after Elne was sacked by Saint Louis' son,

Philip the Bold, in 1285, the Bishop and his Chapter went so far in their enthusiasm for re-building as to plan a new and Gothic choir; but, fortunately for the homogenity of the church's architecture, they built only a foundation which now forms a sort of stone fence about the original apse. Although this, the most drastic change in the first plan, failed, smaller repairs and additions have greatly disturbed the unity of the exterior, and as a whole, it is neither harmonious nor important. The apse is composed of a plain wall, a solid satisfying wall, whose form, like that of Maguelonne, is ecclesiastical, but whose style is purely defensive and utilitarian. The façade seems also primarily a wall of defence, but some of its details are so well-proportioned as to be in themselves almost ornamental; and, had the original plan been carried out, it would have been a notably graceful example of early military construction. The north tower, however, was long unfinished; and at last it was made of brick, after so inferior a fashion that the sentiment of its builders is evident:—"Better a poor tower than none at all." The pleasing combination of symmetry and strength in the original plan of the façade is now seen in its battlemented wall and the south tower. This tower has no religious suggestiveness; on the contrary it is a military structure, a "tower of refuge" of the Catalonian type. Its series of round arches ending in irregular crenellations give it an air of distinction that is lacking in the rest of the exterior, and its proportions, though neither majestic nor severe, are very agreeable to the eye.

In a Cathedral of early construction, it is surprising to



"A TOWER OF REFUGE OF THE CATALONIAN TYPE."—ELNE.

find so large and fine an interior. The three apses, terminating the central nave and the aisles, form a curious construction; but both they and the long series of chapels on the north and south sides are comparatively unworthy parts of the church. Neither is there any beauty of ornamentation. The windows, as in all fortress walls, are few and insignificant. The decorative art is of the XI century, a very early period, and seems confined to the crude capitals of the engaged columns that support the main arches. The general conception makes the peculiar charm of this interior. It is more than the simple, sober dignity common to the first Romanesque. It is the arches of the bays, conceived harmoniously with the fine curves of the vaulting, that give to the severe lines of the piers and the impressive height of the church a grace of form that is wanting in the single-aisled chambers of Agde and Maguelonne.

It was an early summer morning when the traveller first saw Elne, and an hour or two later, as he was resting in the cool of the Cathedral, he heard a faint, minor chant in the distance. He went to the door and found there, waiting, the Suisse dressed in faded regalia. Slowly winding up the hill, he saw a little funeral procession. First came the surpliced lad who carried the heavy, gilt Crucifix; then the Abbé with open Missal, and two altar-boys; then, carried on a stretcher, after the custom of the country, the dead man; and, last of all, a tiny group of mourners. The traveller said that he would retire, during the Requiem, into the Cloister, and the Suisse hurriedly led the way, and with

fine consideration for both him and the bereaved, closed the door that had been open between the Cloister and the church.

He crossed the threshold and stood spellbound. And then a moment later he felt the sudden joy an Arab feels when, after hours of wandering, he comes upon a well, and leaning over, takes in the hollow of his dry, hot hand, the first few drops of blessed water that are to quench his thirst. In no well of all Arabia's land, could thirsty nomad see more clear and limpid beauty than the traveller found in Elne's little Cloister.

Walking about he saw the most bewildering and beautiful mixture of styles, Gothic cross-vaults of the XIII century over purely Romanesque piers and arches, Romanesque columns in support of Gothic capitals, and in return, Romanesque capitals resting on Gothic columns. Such are the results, and strange to say, the entirely beautiful results, of many restorations. The Cloister was built in 1175 under the episcopal protection of Bishop Guillaume Jorda. It was entirely Romanesque and is still essentially of that style. Solid rectangular piers divide each side into four bays and stand at the corners. Each bay has two series of double columns that support round arches. This design is conventional, but the cunning art with which it was executed has made the Cloister one of the most celebrated in the history of Romanesque architecture.

The usual building-stuff of Cathedral-cloisters is stone, which accentuates the general massive lines of the Romanesque; that of Elne is white marble, and this con-



"ONE OF THE MOST CELEBRATED IN THE HISTORY OF ROMANESQUE CLOISTERS."—ELNE.

tributes very sensibly to one of the greatest charms of the Cloisters—their unusual lightness. Lack of delicacy, that quality of the Romanesque which is often a defect, is not apparent here. Not only the material, but many of the proportions of pier and column and the disposition of the carvings add to the general effect of lightness of form. The piers are in true Romanesque consonance—heavy, rectangular, and superbly carved. Their capitals are large panels which form huge canvases, as it were, for the free and magnificent treatment of Biblical and monastical subjects. In juxtaposition to this heaviness, the imposing thickness of the cloister-enclosure and the depth of the arch, there is the narrow curve of the outer arches and a series of exquisitely slender columns. These columns are alternately of red and white marble, sometimes plainly square or round, sometimes carved in graceful, conventionalised designs. In their capitals the artist has clearly shown his conviction that the whole column should contribute to the beauty and not to the dignity of the Cloister. For he has consigned the sculpturing of dramatic subjects, the greater "scenes" of the Church's drama, to the pier. Only a few instances of even simple story are found on the capitals of the columns; they are usually decorated with slender, symbolic animals, or with charming reproductions of the foliage of the country. It seems as if such a combination as massive piers and light columns must be forced or striking, but in realisation it is neither one nor the other. It is a subtle contrast which becomes overbold only in description, and he who conceived its grace has given us the

most delicate and beautifully proportioned of all Romanesque Cloisters.

"Dies Irae, Dies Illa,"—the priestly chant from the church fell upon his unheeding ear. Then followed, in the plaintive minor of the South, "Requiescat in pace," over and over again,—that great heart-cry of ages of mourners,—"May he rest in peace, O Lord!" And suddenly he thought of the doddering old Canons who have long been "resting," resting in the cloister-close. Had he been one of these his soul would have chafed in the groove of churchly service, in never ending chanting to the Lord; and he imagined, years ago and here in Elne, some Canon's soul that must have been like his. When he escaped from endless Psalms, he went—nay, sometimes he ran—to the church-tower; and there, in churchly parlance, he "studied God in His great nature." But in reality he listened to the strong sea winds that buffeted about the tower, and he liked it when they blew him back against the wall. And, best of all, he liked dark days, when clouds were racing in the sky, when the sea beat in heavy waves, and when the mountains seemed to grow blacker and more ominous against the heavens. Then followed other days, when he went from the dim church into the Cloister; and its calm and light and quiet beauty wooed him from weary prayers and thoughts of penance to patience and to peace of soul. And so, for this Canon, years went on; and Time at last found him an old, old man. He could no longer run into the tower, but climbed up slowly, step by step, leaning heavily on the wooden rail. And for these climbs, he chose the clearest

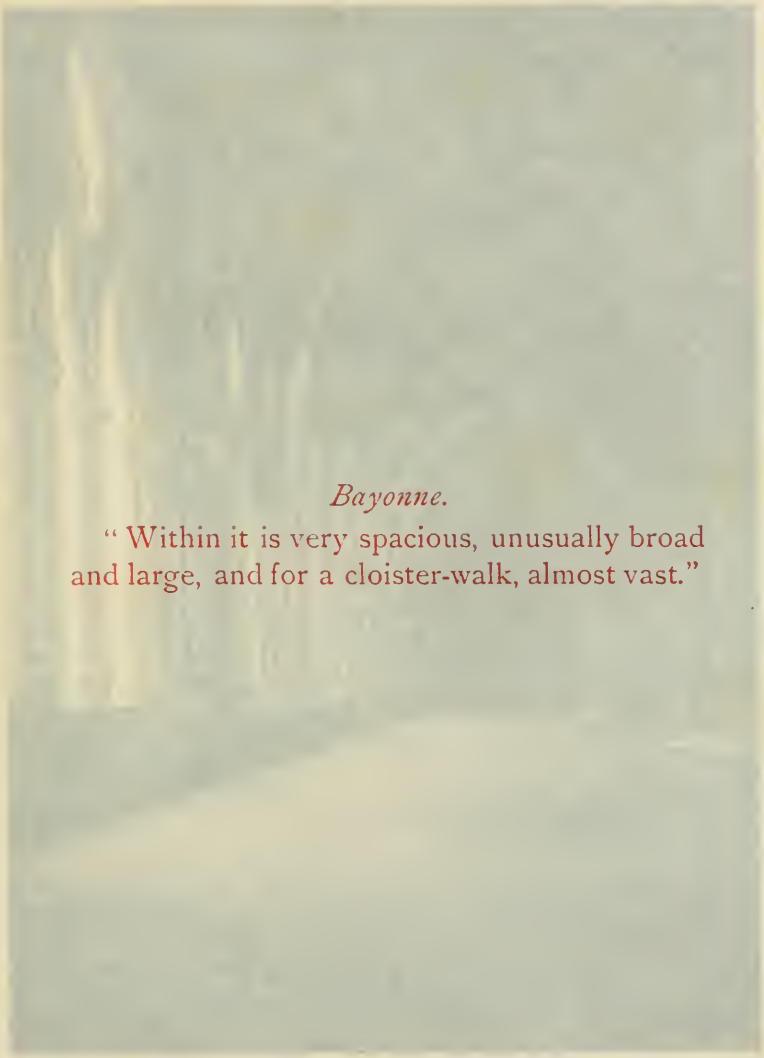


"EXQUISITELY SLENDER COLUMNS."—ELNE.

days, when the sun shone joyously in the blue southern sky, and he thanked God the storms were over and that the sea lay beautiful and calm. And when his old, worn, tired eyes were dazzled with the dancing of the waters he tottered down into the silent Cloister. He could no longer see to read his Missal, so he wandered slowly round the walks, stopping for a moment at this pillar, and then at that. And perhaps some one saw him as he slowly straightened up, and reached to pass his trembling fingers over some carving of a Bible story he had loved to see; perhaps they saw him when he shook his head over some old tale too frankly cut in the stone, or as he smiled when his fingers found the little Infant Christ and His young Mother.

But now the church-door opened; the visions fled; and the traveller heard the faint footsteps of departing mourners and the last murmurs of the priest's voice.

Gascony.



Bayonne.

"Within it is very spacious, unusually broad and large, and for a cloister-walk, almost vast."

Big Ware.

"Within it is very spacious, unusually broad and large, and for a cloister-walk, almost vast."



I.

CATHEDRALS OF THE LANDES.

Dax. In the dark days of religious wars, the mutual reprisals of Catholics and Huguenots do not seem to have been checked by any considerations of religious precept nor of Christian motive, nor, indeed, by anything except the limits of power and opportunity. Unfortunately it is not to be believed that either party would have withheld from any deed destructive of the other. But where the Catholics had one method of action and only one,—the persecution of heretics whereby they were either converted or exterminated; the Huguenot had two outlets for his pious wrath,—the death of his foes and the destruction of their great properties. From his religious point of view, he destroyed places of idolatrous worship, and to his sense of revenge, sweet must have been the thought of the wealth which disappeared beneath his hammer-blows and the reckless flames which he kindled.

To the beauty of art, these destructions have been irreparable. The raids and rasings of the Saracens have taken from us the attempts of a crude architectural period; and we have lost many an interesting step in the progress toward the early ideal. The Huguenots, whose power of destruction was happily less widespread, ruined buildings which

were the perfection of centuries of Christian architecture, at a period when ideals were declining, and the art of church building was becoming a mere imitative and servile trade. It was therefore not only on their antagonists' hearts that their destructive work fell heavily, but on that of every Cathedral-lover of to-day.

The old thermal city of Dax was a Protestant stronghold in 1622, and the unhappy scene of one of the most notable of fanatical rasings. A "vast and spacious" Gothic Cathedral was so totally destroyed during the occupation that only the small sacristy and a portal remain. The portal is one of beautiful sculpturings. The Last Judgment is cut on the tympanum, and below, in full figure, are Christ and His Apostles. The subjects are very usual; but the strong treatment is a suggestion of the magnificence of the older church. The Cathedral of to-day is one of the XVII and XVIII centuries, which the XIX finished with two new towers; a Cathedral large and well kept, whose detail is unworthy of description. As he wandered aimlessly about the nave, the traveller's thoughts reverted to other churches he had seen, and he wondered which of Huguenot depredations had caused him most regret, Tarbes, where a dull, heavy building has been made of the original church and its restorations; Alet, where beautiful ruins remain in solitude, untouched; or Dax, where a fragment of the building of the Centuries of Faith stands in suggestive contrast to the uninspired architecture of later years?

Aire.

Lying inland from the Gulf of Gascony is a stretch of territory called "the Landes." Formerly it was bordered by great, lonely sand dunes which protected it from the sea. Behind them lay the "bad lands" which were, at times, torrid Saharas, where strange hot springs, eerie bogs, and marshes, stretches of vast pine forests, and plains that extended to a dreary, sealike immensity, made up the landscape. Sands, blown by harsh sea winds, covered pools of stagnant water and concealed them from the eye of the unfortunate pedestrian; and, sweeping onward, these same winds often covered entire villages with the sand, and compelled the poor inhabitants to retreat and re-build elsewhere. These encroachments, which the ignorant were powerless to check, made the district one of waste and awesome terror, a desert whose monotony was broken only by the terrifying phenomena of sand-storm, and waters bubbling in inexplicable heat. Through industry and science the human misery of these little steppes has been decreased; and before this "progress of cultivation" the whole physiognomy of the country has changed. Forests break the long lines of the plains, dunes are becoming little, rounded, wooded hills; and if the new growth seems somewhat meagre and the land still barren, its desert-like appearance is disappearing and it is gradually losing its mournful distinctiveness and curious industries.

On the borderland of this department is the seat of one of its two Bishoprics, the very ancient town of Aire-sur-l'Adour, which lies among hills and gracious little valleys and in

the midst of a civilisation too genial to share the peculiarities and uncouthness of the Landais life. Nor is the history of Aire more suggestive than its surroundings, of the strange department of which it is an ecclesiastical head. It is not the home of the Gascon woodsmen; it has never



"IN THE VERY ANCIENT TOWN OF AIRE-SUR-L'ADOUR."

been noted as Bergerac, the birthplace of a poor, proud, Gascon noble; yet, although a modest, quiet, little city, it figures in many of the most dramatic scenes of the history of Southern France, and from its important strategic position on the Adour, between Béarn, Armagnac, and the County of Comminges, it excited the envy of all the power-

ful families, Albrets, Armagnacs, and de Foix, and in their continuous and ruthless feuds suffered much desolation and ruin. From these great houses Aire also received, as was not unusual in that day of princely influences, several of its Bishops; and with the tonsure, these Churchmen did not seem to lose any of the ambitions, shrewdness, nor arrogance which characterised their families in the world. They laboured, however, under this disadvantage,—that their sworn retainers were clerics and their armed force but mercenaries or townsmen. To remedy this evil Peter I invited Edward I, King of England and Duke of Aquitaine, to share with him the revenues, the jurisdiction, and the perils of the sovereignty of Aire, at the same time reserving to himself all possible rights and privileges. In after years when that expedient seemed likely to be more profitable to the King than to the Church, the Bishop effected a tripartite agreement with Gaston de Foix and Edward III, by which they were to keep the peace for him, and receive certain revenues and high-sounding privileges in return. The astute prelate however reserved to himself the "rights" of such indispensable constructions as mills, ovens, and butcheries; and not only these privileges far removed from the spiritual, but the collection of all the alms at fairs, and the power to forbid the building of any church, convent, monastery, oratory, or chapel in Aire. Having established in this practical manner both a worldly and an ecclesiastical monopoly, the further records of the Bishops seem to have been chiefly of their own aggrandisement. One "thought only of increasing his possessions," writes an historian of

the diocese; another whose name was "a synonym of warlike valour" is also renowned for the talent of "amassing revenues;" and in one period of fifty years there were, at least, ten prelates whose "material interests were the mainspring of all their actions." This assiduity and single-mindedness brought the prelates a large share of the power they so coveted; and dire were the punishments which they meted out to miscreants,—to farmers who did not hand to the episcopal treasurer the entire revenue of the bissextile year, to parish priests who did not "assist" at the fête of the patron Saint of Aire, or to the families who did not visit the Cathedral and bring gifts to Saint John the Baptist each year on the twenty-ninth of August. Greater crimes brought even greater punishment, that of excommunication. On one noble who had robbed and insulted the Bishop, this decree fell,—a discipline which was said to be "tempered by mercy,"—the offender first gave money to the poor, then "in honour of God, Blessed John the Baptist, and all the heavenly court," he came to Aire alone, on a feast day when the concourse of people was greatest, and with a lighted candle in his hand, dressed only in a shirt, he walked to the Cathedral. The three following Sundays, his accomplices were forced to come similarly attired, to fall upon their knees and publicly beg forgiveness. The fifth Sunday, a hundred and eighty of his vassals, with scourges in their hands, were summoned to "devoutly receive discipline." The Bishop and the people of Aire, and presumably the "heavenly court," being thus appeased, gratified, and amused for six weeks, the offender—none

less than a son of Gaston of Béarn—was required to give to the Cathedral a statue of Saint John, inscribed with a history of the entire episode. After this the Pope absolved him.

Such episcopal sentences, however justifiable, brought their legitimate consequences in hatred and fresh crimes. One Bishop Garcias was murdered in cold blood; his Grandeur, Anne-Sanche, was assassinated near Nogaro by nobles who were jealous of his large territorial possessions. But neither timidity nor cowardice was a trait of the Bishops of Aire; and Charles Sorbets, an historian favourable to their cause, writes that undeterred by the fate of their predecessors, the clergy of the XVI century were even more grasping than those of earlier times.

During the so-called religious wars of the XVI century, Aire suffered as much through its strategic importance as from the worldly and churchly interests of its prelates. This was the time of great passions and dangers, of Henry IV whom Sixtus V excommunicated as "foresworn, fomenter, abettor, and protector of heresies, and as such, deprived of his seigneuries." These were the days when even that same Henry, the most popular man of Gascony, wrote to de Batz, "Few have deceived but many have betrayed me." Brother warred against brother, cities suffered equally from Catholic Montluc and Huguenot Montgommery; and although never so grievously as by the English, Aire was again sacked and burned.

The English occupation, from the XII to the XIV centuries, must indeed have been a bitter memory to the prelates.

Like their heavenly Master, but most unlike their earthly compeers, they had sometimes had scarcely a place to lay their heads. The city at one time was reduced to twelve inhabitants; and in unwonted poverty and desolation, the Bishop appealed to the Pope to strengthen the See by uniting to it an Abbey which a Count of Gascony had founded many years before in the upper village, the Mas d'Aire. The monastery itself was reduced to a dozen monks; but the papal commission saw the wisdom of uniting two forces, however enfeebled, and the new title, "Bishop of Aire and Sainte-Quitterie," was duly confirmed by a Bull and entered in the "Red Book" of the city, and this is the title which persists to-day. The new Canons were commanded to continue under the Benedictine rule, each Cathedral-church was to have its own laws, privileges, and property, and episcopal elections were to be held alternately at Saint-Jean in the town and at Sainte-Quitterie in the Mas.



A BULL-FIGHT BEFORE THE CATHEDRAL OF AIRE-SUR-L'ADOUR.
(*Copy of an old print.*)

The Church of Saint-Jean, the present Cathedral, is far

less interesting than the old Church of the Mas. Built in the XII and XIV centuries, it was unroofed by Montgommery and all its stalls, statues, and ornaments were destroyed. The additions of the following centuries were so vast that they destroyed much of the original character of the Cathedral and added nothing to its interest or beauty. It is a comparatively small building, with a central nave and two modern aisles and five parallel apses or choir chapels. The whole interior—nave and apses—are frescoed in the subdued colours so common in that country.

The exterior has a low, peaked tower, and irregular walls, that, having no quaintness, are perfectly insignificant. It is a poor, pieced bit of architecture, less interesting in its good repair than many a gaping ruin, and a sad commentary on the careless worldliness of its wealthy and ambitious prelates of the Cathedral-building Ages. Far more interesting in its history, its legend, and its melancholy estate, is the Bishop's Church of Sainte-Quitterie. Half hidden by the trees on the hillside of the Mas, it is not a treasure-trove for tourists nor is it a "great historic monument" which the conscientious traveller must not "miss." And even less would it appeal to the automobilist, who has barely time to glance at monuments as conspicuous as his machine. It is rather the church of the old-fashioned traveller who has time for old tales, time to study little details, and traces of the dangers and peripeties of an architectural life in past Christian ages.

The legend runs that very early in the Christian era a gentle young girl dedicated her life to prayer and to God;

and to escape a heathen marriage, fled from her father. She was discovered and brutally decapitated. Taking her head in her hand, the young maid walked a few paces and fell, and on this spot, where she is believed to have died, a church was built and the tomb of the little martyr became a shrine. After a sweeping destruction of the early centuries, the monks of Sainte-Quitterie went into orthodox Aragon, the native country of the little martyred maid, and begged alms for the XIV century re-construction which still exists. This building was in turn sacked by Montgommery's Protestants, who were well practised in the looting and pitiless mutilation of churches. A century later, bands of Italian workmen overran the country who were skilled in styles of architecture foreign not only to good taste and the mystic spirit of ritual, but to French traditions; and by their unintelligent restorations, they committed new ravages at the Mas. The parish is and has long been a poor one; many of the restorations were undertaken in a



COPY OF MOSAICS FROM THE TOMB OF SAINTE-QUITTERIE.—AIRE-SUR-L'ADOUR.

purely practical manner, many were wretchedly done, many left unfinished. The Bishop of the present day, who has the most intelligent taste, has been able only to begin the modern restorations, and Sainte-Quitterie is a venerable Mother Church on whose battered form every scar of wars and time is clearly visible. It is therefore not a beautifully single whole, but a whole of many differing parts, a sort of witness in stone of the many styles and ideas in the successive architectural steps of different epochs of Christianity.

Above the façade of Sainte-Quitterie rises its tower of brick, which escaped "in vestiges" the fires of the Huguenot soldiers. In its worn decrepitude it is sadly suggestive of other Toulousan towers, as the three fine portals beneath remind one, in their melancholy mutilation, of other Gothic portals. Although not great in their proportions they are fine in detail and interesting in their composition of quaint and terrible conceits. In the development of the main theme, the Last Judgement, some of the damned are already in Hell, tearing their hair, and plunged in cauldrons of burning liquid. Hideous demons are chuckling at their misery; and one, a sort of devil-in-chief, is receiving long rows of Abbots, monks, lords, and merchants, who approach with ropes about their necks to be thrown one by one into the gaping maw of a waiting monster. There are also the more peaceful processions of the righteous, angels, apostles, and prophets. Few however have escaped the rage of the protesting iconoclasts, and here the Huguenots were almost completely successful in their destruction. The rest of the exterior is an old, decaying wall, with the outlines of many

Romanesque and Gothic windows that have been economically walled up. At first glance the church's interior is scarcely less dreary. The nave is covered with a neat coating of whitewash; half hidden by the roof, a rose-window appears, and it was not until the traveller came into



"A SERIES OF BLIND ARCADES OF PUREST ROMANESQUE."—
AIRE-SUR-L'ADOUR.

the old Romanesque choir that he realised what this dreary expanse of paint might conceal. Here, amid whitewash, columns of stucco, white marble, Sarancolin marble, reds, yellows, blues, and everything except good taste, stand two series of blind arcades of purest Romanesque. They were formerly hidden behind paint and the Canons' stalls, and

it is only lately that the Bishop has had them uncovered. They filled the traveller with a rage of destructiveness. He longed to tear down these columns of stucco and of marble, and to beat the whitewashed walls with the glittering candlestick till the plaster should fall away and reveal new conceptions of the art, other subjects than the charming foliage, the quaint apocalyptic animals, and the Biblical scenes that now delight the eye. In default of this pleasure there are the chapels of the lower apse to be visited, and the crypt where Sainte-Quitterie's Tomb and Well stand in the dark gloom. Nearby are two small cells; suspicious looking irons hang from their walls. Some historians say that they were the prisons of the Chapter, others that the insane who were brought to Sainte-Quitterie, their particular patron, were guarded here while their friends besieged heaven for them in the candle-lighted crypt. But to-day, prisoners, old Benedictine monks, and even pilgrims, are all too far from the Mas d'Aire, and for many days of many years the tomb of the gentle martyr remains in dark and silence.

Until the time when Sainte-Quitterie will have found again its ancient glory Aire will be more interesting in history than in fact. Arthur Young wrote eloquently a hundred years age of the dinners of Aire, of "the soup, eels, sweetbreads, peas, pigeons, chickens, the fruits and wines of a wonderful dinner," and was pleased to find himself in "a salon, served by a good girl, well-dressed." But fruits and succulent meats are to be found in many another town of the fair Midi, and until Aire has more than a fine inn, a mediocre

Cathedral in repair, and a finer one in decay, automobiles will pass her by, trains will not come tourist-laden, and even the old-fashioned traveller, with a sigh, may enjoy his history by the fireside at home without stirrings of his familiar Reise-geist.

II.

CATHEDRALS OF THE FOOT-HILLS.

Lombez.

In pursuance of his favourite policy, the attention of John XXII was especially given to those cities which lay about the heretical country of Toulouse. Lavaur, Rieux, Alet, Vabres, Saint-Pons, Condom, Mirepoix, Castres, Saint-Papoul, were raised in rapid succession to the dignity of Bishoprics, and great must have been the consternation of the Archbishops of Albi, Auch, and Toulouse; for in the two years, 1317 and 1318, the changes in their diocesan positions were scarcely less than revolutionary. Added to the long list of bishop-making Bulls were two of 1317 which elevated cities of different dioceses, but of close proximity, Lombez and Mirande.

Mirande, now a much larger city than Lombez, had been founded scarcely more than thirty years before by the good Abbots of Berdouès, and was still a small struggling village; and its Metropolitan respectfully advanced such firm, just, and unanswerable opposition to its elevation that the Pope retired the Bull, and Mirande's curious church, which was built in the same century, was never more than the town's defence and simple parish church.

The elevation of Lombez, on the other hand, was accomplished; the monastery around which the ancient city had

begun to grow over seven hundred years before was raised to the rank of Bishopric, and the Abbey-church of Notre-Dame-la-Save became the Cathedral of Sainte-Marie. Like many of the towns of the Midi, Lombez owed its existence to its monks; and although a nominal possession of the powerful Counts of Comminges, being built on secular ground, it had far more intimate connections with its spiritual masters, who lived within the walls, than with the earthly lords who wandered far and wide and fought in quarrels foreign to her ken. And when my Lord the Bishop came and held his court in the Palace, his was the real temporal, as well as ecclesiastical sovereignty. Lombez was never sufficiently great to tempt its Counts and harass its Bishops as did Lectoure and the Armagnacs, and the buildings of that period which remain, do not speak of a powerful or ambitious episcopacy. The Bishop's Palace was not too great to fall to the minor estate of a Sous-prefecture, and the church itself, although built chiefly by its prelates, is an ungainly, almost a misshapen building, with more of quaintness outside and loftiness within than of charm or beauty. It is early Gothic, and of the brick of the south country, but it has none of the majesty of Albi nor the heavy stateliness of Lavaur, and in spite of the attractiveness of its old irregularity, and its lofty interior, is the least of brick Cathedrals.

The apse is squat and heavy, with a peaked roof of tiles. Thick buttresses support the upper walls, with their many openings; and between the buttresses, in arched recesses, are slender, elongated windows. In contrast to this massive

apse and its regularity of form, is the more slender façade with its vagaries of line, that like the front portals, are monotonously meaningless. From the little square may best be seen the Cathedral's beautiful tower, the octagonal Toulousan tower that has always a peculiar, intrinsic grace. At Lombez, it rises from the north side of the façade-wall, and is truly charming in its five stories of little, pointed windows, its shaft more solid than that of Rieux or of Pamiers, yet with the inalienable lightness of the type.



"THE SLENDER FAÇADE."—LOMBEZ.
(*From an old print.*)

The general effectiveness of the interior lies in the disposition of its vaulting, the unusual length and slimness of its windows, and the interesting glass of the XV century. Except the old leaden baptismal fonts, it has few fine details.

The style of the stalls and of the episcopal throne of the XVII century is quite severely chaste, and in this plain room, there are no vistas, no groupings of pillars, no sumptuous nor awe-inspiring majesty.

It is not always fair to judge a Bishopric by its most enduring outward sign, the Cathedral, nor would it be just to credit the Revolution with any conscious sense of fairness in its suppression of Sees, but in studying the history of many of the little Dioceses of France, it becomes obvious that the causes of their creation were, at most, temporary; and that, especially in the case of Lombez and others of Pope John XXII's elevation, the Church in France suffered little when Napoleon and Pius VII, in the Concordat of 1801, did not re-establish their rank.

Eauze. Auch.

Two centuries after the great Saracenic invasion, a small town began to grow near the banks of the Gélise, about the strong walls of a newly-founded monastery. It was called Eauze, a debased form of Elusa, in memory of the great ruined city near-by. The new Eauze never rivalled the importance of the ancient one. It is a town whose earliest origins are mediæval, and whose greatest relic is a fine Gothic church built in the later years of the Middle Ages by Jean Marre, the Cathedral-building Bishop of Condom. A few miles away lies the double "oppidum" of Esberous which tradition calls the site of the Celt-Iberian settlement; and on a lonely plateau above the river is "La Cieutat," the site of the great Elusa, where many of its antiquities still lie



"THE APSE LOOMS MAJESTICALLY BESIDE THE TOWER OF THE ARMAGNACS."— AUCH.

buried. In the time of Theodosius, this lost city was the metropolis of the entire province of Novempopulania, and on account of its political supremacy in the country its See, which Saint Paternus had founded in the III century, was soon elevated into an Archbishopric. Eleven Bishops of other Gallo-Roman cities were under the jurisdiction of Monseigneur of Eauze, and his became one of the most important dioceses in France.

Although many cities of the earth, once great, have been made desolate, it will always be strange and awesome to the human mind that so many interests, so many lives, so many monuments and industries, should crumble into ruin, that all the work and thought of people who lived no less intensely than ourselves, should vanish and leave scarcely a trace behind. Thus vanished Elusa. In 726 she was a city; in 727, swept by the fire and scimitar of the Saracenic hosts, she lay in ruins. For more than a century the memory of her greatness was respected, but she did not rise again. And when in the course of another hundred years Eauze began to grow, the title of the living Church had passed on, and Auch, her former suffragan, had become the metropolitan See.

Auch was one of those cities which had taken warning at the approach of the barbarians and had prudently retired to the top of a neighbouring hill. Here her Archbishops lived in haughty security, and styled themselves "Primates of Novempopulania." Even later, when the Armagnacs possessed the country, and had become, by their alliances, conquests, and crimes, one of the two most feared and

powerful of feudal families, Auch was merely their nominal capital. Her Archbishops ruled quietly, firmly, and completely, until "His Most Christian Majesty" came into his own and reorganised the province.

No building of Auch's early episcopacy now exists. Four times before the XV century had a Cathedral been built in honour of the "Nativity of Our Lady," and four times had it been demolished. It was not until 1489 that Cardinal Francis of Savoy laid the first stone of the Sainte-Marie which has endured to our own day. Twenty years were consumed in the building of the crypt and choir; and it was only in 1548 that the Cathedral was far enough advanced for consecration. Year after year the building went on, and at length, in 1685, the west towers were finished and the great work completed. Its beginning was in an epoch of degeneration of architectural ideals, and during the long period of its construction this degeneration was so accentuated by new and false theories of ecclesiastical style, that little can be expected of the churches of that time; and in the light of its architectural perils, Sainte-Marie is doubly interesting.

A long distance from Auch, the Cathedral may be seen above the city, not as a watch-tower like Lectoure, nor as a church on a height that looks small and graceful in the far perspective. It is not lost upon its summit, nor does distance dwarf its greatness. It seems to stand upon its hill as a lofty statue upon a fitting pedestal, majestic and compelling. As one comes nearer, the proportions of the Church grow no less fine. It is never over-heavy, nor does it be-



"ITS HUGE FAÇADE RISES HIGH ABOVE THE OPEN SQUARE."—AUCH.

come merely the most beautiful of the many buildings of the town. From the riverbank, at the foot of the great staircase, its apse looms majestically with the Tower of the Armagnacs, and its huge façade rises high above the open square. In spite of its many styles,—a choir of debased Gothic, a classical portico, and two square towers of the composite type, this church is one of the most imposing of the Midi; its heavy lines are not awkward, and its massiveness is never unwieldy.

The conventional composition of the interior is a Latin Cross,—three naves with side-chapels, transepts, and a choir with an ambulatory and its radiating chapels. Nave and choir are of equal length; and if only it were not cut by a screen, the long, unbroken vista down the central aisle would be magnificently imposing. Down the broad side-aisles the view is undisturbed for the great space between the portal and the choir windows; across the generous breadth of the church, its seemingly slender columns rise into the heavy shadows of the vault, and so vast is the space, so full of freedom and of large simplicity, that its obvious faults are lost in the majesty of its size. This church has, too, the qualities of its defects. Its poor triforium is at least plain and the scroll-work small; its pillars, with their ugly moulding and lack of capitals, have the grace of slenderness and uncarved height; the absence of all that is really beautiful in line has a compensation in an effect of severity, and the general bareness of architectural conception accords with great size and is appropriate to vast proportions.

Simple in plan, this interior is rich in detail, with a richness that is sometimes oppressive and absurd, sometimes beautiful in itself, but at all times out of harmony with the overpowering and cold simplicity of the general scheme. Happily the decorations of really monstrous taste, the red



"TRADITION SAYS THAT THESE STALLS WERE CUT FROM THE OAKS OF THE ARCHEPISCOPAL DOMAIN OF MAZÈRES."—AUCH.

marble, stucco statues, altars of painted wood, and ornaments of tawdry brass, are literally lost—swallowed as it were—in space and in capacious shadows; and those which are the church's works of art, its stained glass and its choir-stalls, stand forth plainly. The rose of the nave is not a wonderful conception, but the windows of the choir are



"DOWN THE LONG SIDE-AISLE THE VIEW IS UNDISTURBED."— AUCH.

believed to be among the most beautiful of the Renaissance, and tradition says were so much appreciated by Catherine de' Médicis, that only the courageous efforts of the Canons prevented their summary removal to Paris. Unlike much of the stained glass of the Midi, these windows are an interesting study. Their reds, blues, and greens are rich and beautiful and show a maturity of the art of sumptuous colouring, which is in striking contrast with the crude designs of figures more than life-size, and anachronisms that show an amusing immaturity of historic criticism. Here are the heathen strangely concerned in Christian happenings, a classic Prophetess foretelling the Annunciation, the Sibyl of Delphi in the companionship of Haggai and Saint Jude, Noah and Jacob with Saint Peter, Abraham and Melchisedec with Saint Paul and the Seeress of Samos; and this juxtaposition, far from being unaccustomed or unorthodox, is at once a portrayal of the intimate connection between the old Dispensation and the New, and a reminder that the heathen Sibyls thrust into this Biblical company had long been held in veneration by the Church, and that so great a doctor as Saint Augustine believed that their prophecies were often divinely inspired.

During the days of '89, these large windows inexplicably, but fortunately, escaped. The Revolutionists contented themselves with removing the glass which represented episcopal escutcheons and so replacing the pieces that their design was lost. They destroyed many of the furnishings of the chapels, but a big auto-da-fé in the public square, in which a Crucifix and a beautiful old statue of Our Lady

of Auch were burned, seemed to satisfy their destructive fury, and the choir-windows and the stalls escaped almost untouched.



"THE FIRST PARENTS OF US ALL." CARVINGS OF THE STALL OF THE ARMAGNACS.— AUCH.

Tradition says that these stalls were cut from the oaks of the archepiscopal domain of Mazères; and in 1651, seventy years before the building of the vaulting, they were placed in the choir. Less delicate than the choir-wood of Amiens, they are yet comparable to that unequalled work of northern art in grace and lavishness of carving. A dais, lace-like in design, a hundred little spires and columns of the Flamboyant style, Saints, Prophets, and Virtues, large figures with myriads of tiny ones attendant, and symmetric motifs of the Renaissance, all are most daintily and skilfully carved. The grace of the Renaissance and the slender delicacy of the Gothic are successfully united in the creation of one of the most charming wood-carvings in all the South. In olden days, worshippers were spared the ugly magnificence of the XVII century altar



"THE ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPTION IS APPROPRIATE TO VAST PROPORTIONS."— AUCH.

that shocks the modern eye, and a pulpit which now unreasonably adorns the Archbishop's library, stood in the choir. Not only the regular, but the honorary Canons of the Cathedral, four of the greatest barons of the land, sat in these stalls, and underneath the carving of the first parents of us all, the haughtiest of their Gascon children, the Counts of Armagnac had their seat. Stranger even than the companionship of the carved Patriarchs and "Virtues," must have been that of the priests and laymen who met beneath them at the time of Mass.

In detail, whether in its crypt, the slender spiral staircase of its tower, its choir-wood, or its stained glass, Sainte-Marie is always interesting. In its majestic whole, its great domination of the surrounding country, the splendour of its size, and the cold spacious vastness of its naves, it is always imposing. And although it is not the most beautiful nor the most inspired of Cathedrals, it is one of the finest and most worthy creations of its late, unworthy day.

Lectoure.

Lectoure, in the time of the Cæsars, was one of the chief cities of her territory, and lay rich and prosperous on the banks of the Gers. But with the weakening of the imperial power, the great tribal invasions came sweeping southward through the valleys of Novempopulania, and the barbarians rased, burned, and destroyed everything along their path. It was during these terrible years of the V century, when whole towns lay in smouldering ruins and their inhabitants trembled

at sight of the slightest smoky cloud that rose on the horizon, that the hills became their refuge; and the Gallo-Romans of Lectoure fled to the very top of one of the highest and steepest in the country around, where, in comparative safety, they could watch the march of invaders and signal to their neighbours of the oncoming peril.

For sometime, as was the usual episcopal prerogative, the Bishop of Lectoure was the temporal ruler of his city; but the famous Armagnacs looked with envy upon the height and safety of the hill, and with the growth of their importance and audacity, in 1325, the very year of the present Cathedral's consecration, they relieved the Bishop of half his temporal power and made Lectoure their capital.

Although shorn of much revenue, the prelates continued the re-building of the church through the XV and XVI centuries; and it served, as did the city, both the Church and the Counts. While Canons sang long Psalms and Bishops celebrated holy Mass, in the body of the church, lords and vassals mounted to the tower and threw stones and boiling oil upon their enemies encamped below the town. Fortunately this very temporal use of the holy edifice did not entail its destruction, and it has withstood much better than its town, the perils of war and of time; for with the fall of the Armagnacs, Lectoure suffered greatly. Louis XI's first army entered after eight months of dreadful siege, and history relates that Cardinal Jouffroy, the Bishop of Albi, who commanded for the king in later times, had small regard for his priestly brother's See and treated it as a free-



"THE SINGLE TOWER."— LECTOURE.

booting general might have done, not with the suave and lofty graciousness of a lordly prelate. Unlike the tribes who left her safe on her high hill, unlike the military priest who sacked her cruelly, modern life has left Lectoure in lonely isolation. Up the steep incline which leads from the station and the busy world, her inhabitants climb painfully to a few long, deserted streets, a few little shops, and a quiet, village life. The sun shines fiercely on them, storms and winds sweep lustily across their hilltop, and from a pleasant, shady square, they look out over the vast panorama of their country-side, the farms and towns, the silhouetted towers of Auch, the rolling hills and rich plains which are framed on the far-distant horizon by the protecting barriers of the Pyrenees.

In the heart of this deserted little town, in the midst of modest buildings which make its size impressive, stands the large and battered Cathedral of Saint-Gervais-et-Saint-Protais. It is without a noble façade, its Gothic buttresses are of very mediocre conception, and its walls are partly concealed by trees and the Palace of its former Bishops. The single tower had once a spire nearly three hundred feet high, a wonder in the Midi, but it fell long ago; and the church's dignity now lies in the sturdy old supporting tower which still dominates the country. Its weatherbeaten stones are poor and chalky, and here and there the edges of its blocks have crumbled into dust. And this very crumbling mellows the hard lines of the church as time brings softness to the tinge of marble, and makes it more beautiful than in the crudity of its youth.

Because of its conflicting styles, the interior is not pleasing at the first glimpse. The nave is a room of generous size with chapels between the heavy wall-buttresses. The choir is purely Gothic and much more ambitious—and beautifully ambitious—than the rest of the church. Its ambulatory lies partially outside the dimensions of the nave, and disturbs the natural relationship and harmony of both. With its upper gallery and shallow chapels the nave is neither beautiful nor impressive; and the effect of the choir has been spoiled by unique church ornaments, suspended above the choir-arches, which look like two pairs of huge, gilt shears. The traveller, who was dazzled by their glitter, supposed they were relics, reminders of legend or history, or even that they illustrated a theological tenet or threat. But they proved to be two pairs of Bishop's Crooks, and although they were an artistic blemish, he sympathised with the pride of the Lectourais who could see, at least at Mass, the insignia of their city's last departed rank.

To walk about the ambulatory with its mellow light and high, almost uncarven pillars, is the chief joy Lectoure can give. Between a seeming multitude of columns, the nave is so vaguely seen that it might well be grand and lofty. Chapels open all about the walk, and high within their vaulting, where pillars lose themselves in misty light, are the sombre blues and golds in which the South delights. It is a simple, yet lofty conception which this late Gothic builder of the South put into the choir of Lectoure, less delicate than that at Carcassonne and not so grandly large as that of Auch, but worthy of the majesty of ritual which is



"THE AMBULATORY WITH ITS MELLOW LIGHT AND ALMOST UNCARVEN PILLARS."— LECTOURE.

chanted there, worthy to inspire those noble thoughts and those uplifting meditations which faithful Catholics are wont to seek within the Church of God.

Condom. The cities of the South sometimes owe their existence to a Roman or a Gallic foundation, sometimes to the fostering protection of monasteries, and sometimes to the establishment of "bastides" whose foundation was encouraged in the latter part of the Middle Ages by the grants and charters—more or less generous—of lay and ecclesiastical lords. Condom began, in the IX or X century, to grow about a community of Benedictines, and like many other towns encouraged by the industry and better-trained intelligence of these pioneers of the church, became of such size and importance that in 1289 Edward, Duke of Anjou and Normandy and King of England, held his court there. At this time the city was not a Bishopric; but less than thirty years later, John XXII created the See, and it was one of the many which rose in 1317 only to be suppressed at the Revolution.

At first, the new Bishops would seem to have contented themselves with the existing church, but when John Marre mounted the episcopal throne, Condom had not only a prelate, but an enthusiastic church-builder, one who had planned much of the Cathedral of Auch and the entire Gothic church of Eauze. In his eyes, the old church of Condom was not a fitting Cathedral. He was, as nearly all the prelates of the day, lord of the city. But history is filled with quarrels

between the Bishops and the Consuls of the people, the infringements of each on the rights and privileges of the other, and the consequent recriminations and compromises; and before John Marre began his new Cathedral he was obliged to consult the "Consuls," who graciously consented to the plans if the Bishop would promise to demolish the ancient



"THE CATHEDRAL."—CONDOM.

edifice little by little, and only when it impeded the advancement of the new. The Bishop promised, and proceeded to a contract with the "master" or builder. It was agreed that the church should be finished in seven years, that Monseigneur should furnish annually one third of the revenues of the See or two thousand pounds, three carts



"THE BEAUTIFUL AND SIMPLE GOTHIC CLOISTER."—CONDOM.

and horses for the transport of material, and a large quantity of grain and wine; and that the contribution of the Chapter should be one tenth of its income, the revenue of a prebendary, and wood from its forest land of La Gardère.

The Cathedral was not finished in the stipulated seven years; and although the work went on and Jean Marre saw its essential completion, he did not have the privilege of consecrating the church. At his death in 1521, Francis I appointed as Bishop his old teacher and Grand Almoner, François Dumoulin; while the Chapter elected another, their Vicar General, who was confirmed by his Archbishop. Warfare between the two candidates continued for several years. The plague added its devastation to the country; and the Cathedral remained unconsecrated until 1531. For nearly forty years the prelates enjoyed their new church in quietude, and then came a greater scourge than plague or internecine struggles, the Huguenots. Parts of the Cloister were torn down, many statues were destroyed, and in 1569, the terrible Montgommery planned the entire demolition of the Cathedral. The terror of the inhabitants of the city can be imagined. Torn by horror at the blasphemy, and grief at the ruin of their new and chief treasure, their courage and devotion rose to the importance of the crisis. They went to the redoubtable Captain of heretics, and by paying the goodly sum of thirty thousand, some say fifty thousand, livres, they at last persuaded him to spare the church. The Cloisters were restored in the XVII century, and to-day, Condom's group of episcopal buildings is

the most completely preserved of any See in Gascony, and one of the most interesting of the Midi.

The Bishop's Palace is separated from the Cathedral by a beautiful and simple Gothic Cloister, doubly arcaded on two sides, full of gentle shadows, and reflections of column after column cast on its floor, with the sun shining in the close beyond. There is but little carving in the Cloister, no storied capitals, no foliage in stone; and its beauty consists in the vista of pillar following pillar as trees in a forest, and in the curves of the vaulting which spread like fine strong branches in this canopy of stone. The enclosure is small, yet it has far greater freedom of perspective than is usual in these narrow walks; and sunshine and fresh air give a brightness which enhances the beauty of these groups of columns, seldom found save in the secluded majesty of a church.

Beyond the Cloister rises the tower and the great buttressed walls of the Cathedral itself. It is a heavy building. The large, square tower projects beyond the façade, and in it, the main portal has been cut. But neither that portal nor the more elaborate one of the south side are worthy of long study. The church has no daintiness of decoration, no outward delicacies of form; and it is from afar, from the valleys, that the heavy walls and tall, angular tower lose their awkward massiveness and become finely imposing as they dominate the city on its low hill.

The interior is an immense room of monumental aspect, without aisles or transepts. The chapels which line the walls, and the choir-screen which is very far from small,



"THE INTERIOR IS AN IMMENSE ROOM WITHOUT AISLES OR TRANSEPTS."—CONDOM.

are lost in the immensity. Through the beautiful windows of the choir and nave the church is filled with floods of light. The vaulting springs with a truly noble breadth of curve, and underneath its vast expanse the flood of light, falling between the white stone walls, far from creating an atmosphere of open bareness, makes this spaciousness impressive, luminous, and beautiful, as if the great and munificent God had said here, "Let there be light."

The choir-screen is a charming modern work in terra-cotta, of the same half white, half yellow as the church's walls. A screen crowned by myriads of little Gothic turrets rises high above the Canons' stalls, and against it, a company of Saints stand on their pedestals as if, like the priests who sit beneath them, they were assisting at the Mass. On either side the screen ends in a graceful little trellis, which spans the short space between it and the wall, and forms an arcaded opening to the ambulatory which the screen itself creates in the church's choir. The whole conception is most light and open, full of grace and delicacy; and unlike most choir-enclosures it has the practical merit of leaving the High Altar in view, not only of the assisting clergy, but of the humble laity without its gates; and unlike many another it has not only an intrinsic charm, but does not destroy by its beautiful presence the more important homogeneity of the church itself.

Another treasure of the Cathedral is two octagonal Gothic chambers, one above the other. The modern use of these beautiful rooms as a sacristy will serve as text for the lament of the eminent archæologist of Condom at the present con-

dition of the great group of ecclesiastical buildings, as it would serve for many another like lamentation in many another city. "The beauty of the architecture remains, but I see the modern hook which holds the shiny coat of the sacristan on the wall; the Palace still remains, but it is a noisy court-house. The Cloisters?—but the town-hall occupies the upper floors! And I beneath? Yes, I may stand beneath its arches and think of the prelates who have been here in the past, of Jean Marre who planned these walks, of Hugh de Grossoles who succeeded him, of Bossuet, the greatest of them all; and in the midst of my dream, I move, and upset the egg-basket of a passing peasant, or I unwittingly jostle a child. Where then is the charm which rightfully belongs to these lovely Cloisters? Where their peace and quiet and poetry? Do not speak to me of restorations! I prefer the solitary ruins of la Romieu to these rehabilitated cloister-walks that are now the thoroughfare of all the world, and the idling place of strollers and of vagabonds."



"THE AMBULATORY WHICH THE SCREEN CREATES IN THE CHURCH'S CHOIR."—CONDOM.

III.

CATHEDRALS OF THE PYRENEES.

Saint-Lizier.

Like so many of the great hills and mountains of Europe, the Pyrenees are full of the mystery of the past. They have been a safe refuge for criminals, the home of many generations of political and religious outlaws, the scene of the wildest living, and the simplest ceremonies, the least known and perhaps the most erratic of beliefs. As the greatest of rivers have their sources in the concealed crevasses of the rocks, so movements which have influenced the world's thought have sometimes come from ideals that refugees have preserved in the safe secrecy of the mountains. History records the movement, but she seldom penetrates the obscurity of its origin, and even tradition is vague and exaggerated. In the Pyrenees, Paganism lurked long after the country was nominally christianised. Priscillians, persecuted by most orthodox Spain, fled here; and although they were not suavely received by the Church in France, it is asserted that their Manichæan doctrines persisted among the people of hidden places from the time of their coming in the IV century to the XII, when they greatly influenced the Albigenses. For the very excellent reason that they lived secretly and left to their enemies the care of presenting their cause to history, these sects are very generally character-

ised as abominably wicked and heretical, and the poverty of detail which we possess leads us to suspect the churchly authorities at least of a poor and insufficient knowledge. The faith of Mediævalism was a simple and uncritical one. Of what importance were shades of unorthodoxy? "He who believeth not, shall be damned," and the Church proceeded as quickly as possible — not to the trial — but to the sentence, the punishment. And we know no more of the greater number of the protesting sects than of one of their company, the "Cagots," who were stigmatised by the superstition of the Middle Ages as "cannibal, heretic, and delivered unto all vices."



A BISHOP OF SAINT-LIZIER.
(*Copy of an old portrait in the Sacristy of the Cathedral.*)

For a thousand years, the Church in this section of the country had but one See, that of Couserans, and if local tradition may be believed, the Saracens destroyed both the Cathedral and the Cathedral-city in the VIII century and some pious monarch, Charles Martel, or perhaps Charle-



"THE QUAINT AND VENERABLE CATHEDRAL LIES AMID THE SNOW-CAPPED PYRENEES."—SAINT-LIZIER.

magne, enabled the prelates to re-build the town. They changed its name to Saint-Lizier, in memory of their canonised Bishop, and the Counts of Couserans were soon obliged to hold their court at Massat and became strangers to their capital where the Bishops ruled both temporally and spiritually.

The little hilly town is now very quiet and old and all its ecclesiastical prestige is gone. But many of its monuments remain, the ramparts and their twelve strong towers, the two old Cathedrals of Sainte-Marie-de-la-Sède and Saint-Lizier, and the huge episcopal Palace which dominates the city like a castle. This was built in 1665 by Bernard de Marmiesse as if to perpetuate the memory of the Bishop's declining greatness. Owing to its convenient position within the Palace walls, Sainte-Marie-de-la-Sède lost its title of Cathedral in 1667 and became the private chapel of the prelates. It is a small, modest building of the XIV century, and is in no architectural sense equal to the Church of Saint-Lizier, in the town.

Looking down from the Bishop's gardens on this quaint and venerable church, its position is no whit less beautiful than the far-famed site of Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. Far below rushes a mountain river, small villages lie along its banks, and fields stretch far beyond to the distant snow-capped Pyrenees; and above the roofs and chimneys of the town itself, rises the long line of Cathedral-walls and the low, flat, brick tower.

The present church is the result of the Cathedral-building of centuries. Supposedly constructed over Roman ruins

and from their débris, its foundations are of an unknown epoch. An apse was re-built in the XI century, and during the next three hundred years, the whole edifice was recon-



"THE SINGLE NAVE."—SAINT-LIZIER.

structed. It has no façade, and only one low, old, mutilated portal. Its walls are irregular and plain, two of its little apses are tiny, but its great round, central apse is a fine relic of the Romanesque, and by reason of its good old age,

its low, stanch walls, and quaint irregularities, it is always picturesque. The interior has a single nave, with narrow transepts and the chapels of its apses. Far more than the exterior it shows the melancholy of its age, the shabbiness of decayed gentility. Firmly built, with honourable simplicity of purpose, its furnishings are of many epochs and



"THE BRIGHT LITTLE CLOISTER."—SAINT-LIZIER.

many degrees of taste. Sometimes the altars are in their proper places; sometimes they project unpleasantly outside the wall-arches of the nave into which they have been squeezed. One is partly built of Roman blocks that have truly pagan carvings, others are gilded specimens of the Renaissance. There are staring statues of Saints more

loved in mediæval days than now, and stucco figures of Saint Anthony of Padua and of the Virgin of a modern apparition. All is sadly, pitifully poor—even the little waxen bridal wreath that lies, a token of great gratitude, at the Virgin's feet.

A small door leads into the bright Cloister; whose open, upper story is built of XV century wood and whose beamed ceiling gives it a gentle homeliness that the stately vaulted Cloisters often lack. Arches, through which one looks into the little close, are round, and slim pillars with worn capitals uphold them. A certain wornness, not too great, mellows a carved design as age improves fine marble, and these old sculptures on the capitals, with their signs of time and storm, are beautifully and variously delicate. A demure young Virgin stands in the little close; and around her, all the plants are overgrown, as if the merry southern sun loved to shine there and tempt a gay luxuriance of leaves and bushes. He shines even into the depths of the walks, on the little altar, and the tomb of a Bishop whom the people would revere as a Saint if the Curé had allowed. The door into this happy little solitude is locked, and few now enter.

In modern days, its two completed stories have even been maligned as the "mere suggestion of a Cloister." No one has cared to describe the Cathedral's quaint decrepitude, no one has written eloquently—as might well be done—of its surrounding Pyrenees, and it is to be feared that few even of those who claim to know the Midi have climbed the steep hill of Saint-Lizier.

Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges.

Seventy-two years before Christ, the remnants of some half-Gallic, half-Spanish tribes, fleeing before Pompey, found refuge in the fastnesses of the Pyrenees; and a few of these mountaineers whom Saint Jerome calls "brigands," founded on the steep, shelving sides of a hill, the town of Lyon-de-Comminges. Lying safely among the mountains, on the great Roman road to Toulouse, the town grew in quiet prosperity. It became the seat of one of the earliest Bishoprics, and before the VI century, it had many sumptuous buildings and thirty thousand inhabitants. About this epoch, a son of Clotaire—real or pretended—came from Constantinople to claim a share of the paternal inheritance. He coveted above all the provinces of the South, and by promising to establish an empire according to ancient laws and imperial traditions, he attracted many Gallo-Romans to his cause. In 584 he took up his position in Lyon-de-Comminges, the principal stronghold of the Pyrenees. There he was defeated by Gontran, the legitimate lord of the country, and the last episode of the struggle between Roman culture and northern barbarism was celebrated by the complete destruction of the city. "Not a dog was left," writes Gregory of Tours; and for five hundred years, the hill was deserted, covered only with heaps of crumbling ruins. The Bishops were not greatly occupied in re-building their episcopal seat, and would seem to have been among those whom Gregory VII arraigned as "seeing the wolf tear the lambs of the Lord asunder under their very eyes,

take flight and hide themselves like dogs who have not strength enough to bark."

In 1075, in the midst of great rejoicings, Bertrand de l'Isle-Jourdain, Archdeacon of Toulouse, was consecrated Bishop of the ruined city by the Archbishop of Auch, in the Cathedral of his new diocese. The Church of Saint-Just, in the valley, which had been begun over a hundred years before, is believed to have been the temporary Cathedral, the scene of this joyous consecration. Unlike the Bishops of the five preceding centuries who had endured, if not with complacency at least with indolence, the ruins of Comminges, Saint Bertrand, says an ancient breviary, "began to work as if he had several bodies, or rather as if he had none." He re-established discipline, and founded, under the strict rule of Saint Augustine, a community of Canons who should live in the city; there he built a Palace, and wonderful to relate, took up his residence in it; and in 1082 he began a new Cathedral on the supposed site of the old, using the ancient stones.

By the end of his long life he had practically founded a new city where he was the temporal as well as the spiritual ruler. This double sovereignty, which he transmitted to his successors, was so well sustained by them that the Lords of Comminges never again ruled in their capital. The communal organisation which the city received in the XIII century was granted by the Bishop, not the Count, and as soon as Alexander III had canonised Saint Bertrand, the name of the town was changed, and Lyon-de-Comminges, capital of a



"THE CHURCH OF SAINT-JUST, . . . BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN THE SCENE OF THIS JOYOUS CONSECRATION."— SAINT-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES.

County, became Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, a city of the Church.

Not less famous than the saintly and gifted prelate was



THE BISHOP'S PALACE.—SAINT-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES.

his clever and unscrupulous successor Bertrand de Goth, who, on ascending the throne of Saint Peter as Clement V, never forgot the little city he had ruled for four years. Like all the French Popes, he was interested and prodigal in

church building; and as long as he lived, the papal treasury bore the expenses of the construction of the Cathedral. Clement built the Gothic part of the church and he journeyed several times to the Pyrenees to see its progress with his own eyes. But in spite of its Saint and its exalted patron, the city never regained its ancient importance. After the Albigensian wars the whole region was completely devastated. Some cities were destroyed by invading armies, some were abandoned, and those that escaped became mere fortress-strongholds, not the flourishing, trading communes of the more peaceful mediæval days. The religious "Crusade" of the XVI century was almost equally fatal to the country. Three times bands of Huguenots surprised Saint-Bertrand, and in spite of her strong position and the heroic courage of the Bishop, the greater part of the population was killed, their riches stolen or destroyed, and the city again almost annihilated.

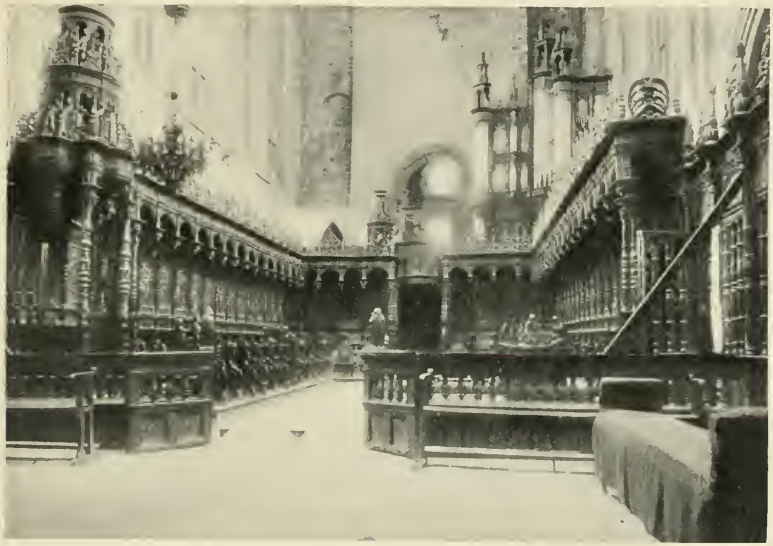
After the XIV century, the prelates, except in isolated instances, paid little attention to the Cathedral-city. When in the diocese, they preferred to occupy one of their châteaux. Their usefulness seemed to decline with that of the city, and at the Revolution the See was suppressed forever. Far from modern life, Saint-Bertrand fell from the importance of a city and is now no more than a decrepit little mountain village in the Pyrenees.

The Church of Saint-Just stands in the midst of broad fields, surrounded by its little cemetery and tall funereal poplars. This is supposed to have been the Pro-cathedral of the ruined city, the scene of Saint Bertrand's coronation.



"THE CATHEDRAL OWES MUCH TO THE ROMANCE OF ITS POSITION."—SAINT-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES.

The choir, its older part, seems to belong to the Carlovingian period, and its three small naves to the later era of the Saint himself. Its beauty is architectural, and does not depend, as in the church on the hill, upon its accessory treasures. Archaic and rude in many of its details, primi-



"THE STALLS NOW STAND IN SOLEMN QUIET."—SAINT-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES.

tive in the form of the exterior, it has a purity of style that is lacking in the Cathedral itself. There is a true majesty of arch-line, a beautiful Romanesque simplicity, and a fine unity; and in spite of isolation and its melancholy estate, denuded of all the arts of churchly furnishing, with an altar-cloth of patchwork and a pulpit of rough pine boards,

this church was finely conceived and is the chief treasure of the country round.

The Cathedral owes much to the romance of its position. It stands, stanch and firm, at the summit of the hill, with houses clustering about. The walls seem fortified like those of some oldtime castle, and its heavy donjon tower, with a still heavier hood of wood and slate, dominates the whole country in quaint and solid majesty.

Climbing the steep hill to the town and looking up the twenty steps of the church's entrance, the tower seems to form the whole façade; and with its great weight and its deep portal, its rounded arch, and Romanesque carvings, it is finely, if somewhat heavily impressive. Beyond the portal is the vestibule, formed of the first bay of the old church of the Bishop-Saint himself. Its two pillars support the cupola which rises in the tower; and against the wall, in the dark, hangs the famous crocodile of a rather modern legend. Beyond the walls again, lies the main body of the church. Here is the great room which composes the interior, and its surrounding chapels, with the high vaulting of XIV century re-building; the Gothic construction of Pope Clement. In spite of its size, the space seems restricted. An altar, which was used for parish services, was placed in the first Gothic bay, and far too near, rises the obstructing wall of the choir-screen. More than at Rodez, even more than at Albi, was the people's place curtailed, and made bare and gloomy. The Gothic windows, which contain fragments of fine old glass, are long and narrow, the great vaulting is very cold and high, the



"THE CHOIR-SCREEN."—SAINT-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES.

stone seems a forbidding grey, and even the sun and many candlelights fail to add cheer. In spite of the shrine and the old tombs of the side-chapels, the glories of the church are within the choir-screen, for this was a church for churchmen. Tradition says that it was on the Christmas night



"THE CANONS' CLOISTER."—SAINT-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES.

of 1535 that these works of Bishop Jean de Mauléon, the screen, the stalls, the rood-loft, and the altar were consecrated. The Canons must have shivered in their fur-trimmed capes, their breath must have seemed white as the snow outside, and their fingers almost too stiff to hold a breviary, as they walked in stately procession in the

wintry night, through the darkness and the shadows of the church, into the flickering and spluttering and blazing of the new altar's light.

The stalls now stand in solemn quiet, the last of their Canons is long dead, and except at times of pilgrimage



"TOWARDS THE MOUNTAIN THE ENCLOSING WALL WAS NOT BUILT UP."—SAINT-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES.

they seem only a deserted relic of an old-time art. There are sixty-six stalls, a canopied throne for the Bishop when he was assisting at a Mass, and still another when he himself was celebrant. Although these carvings are not as delicate as the best of northern work, nor as beautiful as those of Auch, they have a very rich exuberance; and the statues

of Prophets, Saints, and Sibyls, the daïs ending in its little pointed gables, the rood-loft with its tree of Jesse,



"THE TRUEST ARCHITECTURAL BEAUTY."—SAINT-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES.

and the reredos—unfortunately painted, but no less skilfully cut from solid wood,—these are details which have added to this large, bare church, the beauty and im-

pressiveness of a complete and well-conceived "liturgic choir."

There is a far more haunting charm in the Canons' Cloister than in the Canons' choir. Although beautiful, it is not architecturally finer than many another Cloister, its little columns are not more slender, their capitals, although delicate and various, are not more finely carved, its arches are not more symmetrically round, and through the arches, is the same small close one sees in every Cloister; but toward the mountains, the enclosing wall was not built up; and instead of the grey monotony of stone, there is a vast stretch of earth and heaven. The Canon, working out the struggle of his human life in measured prayer, looked out beyond his cloistered hilltop to the mountains and the wildernesses of their woods. He saw the storms and winds, the rains and blinding snows; and perhaps by very looking upon the winter's conflict on these mountains, or on their more quiet springs, he found, like old King David, a new and stronger inspiration toward a holy life.

Many an hour of pure delight may be spent here by churchman or layman of the present day. For here is the truest architectural beauty of Saint-Bertrand, and here is felt most deeply the grandeur of its mountains and its changing skies. And here may well be realised this truth—that the far-famed reputation of the church lies not in its intrinsic worth or harmony of structure, but in its commanding position among the wild and snow-capped Pyrenees.

Tarbes.

In spite of the riotous incursions of Huguenots and the slower devastations of Father Time, the Cathedral of Tarbes presents to-day a fully completed whole. Not a stone is lacking in its heavy exterior, and even the roofs of the hideous



THE CATHEDRAL.—TARBES.

tower which rises above the venerable little apses shine with modern slate. In the church, no colour, at least no striking colour, has been omitted; and gilded capitals, red marble

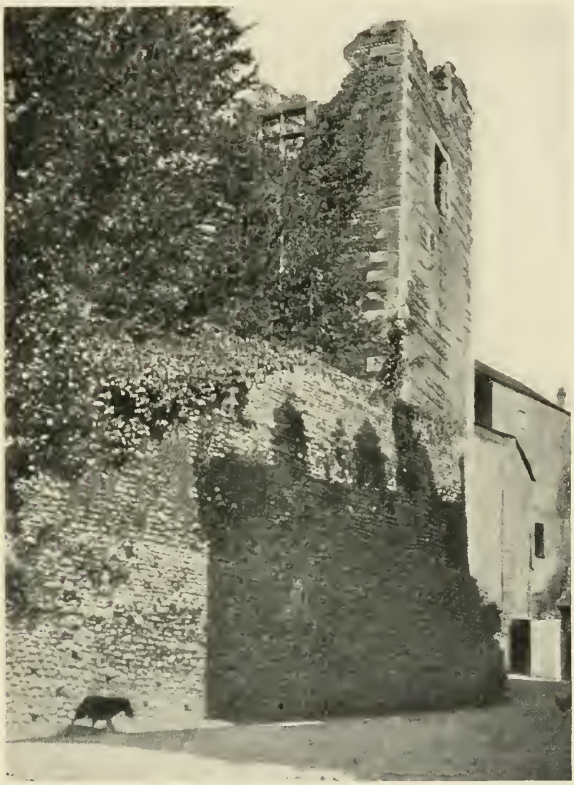
columns, and all kindred accessories of the rococo, have been freely introduced to complete the degradation of an interior already architecturally insignificant. The only emotion the Cathedral suggests is wonder—whether its style of restoration resulted from a barbarous or a vitiated taste.

Lescar.

In 840, bands of Normans roving in the south country, destroyed an ancient city, Beneharnum, which had given its name to the entire province of Béarn; over a hundred years later, when the Duke of Gascony by delivering the country from these furious foes had restored peace, a new city was founded which claimed to occupy the site of Beneharnum, and received the name Lascurris or Lescar. Its importance grew rapidly; and during the Middle Ages, its Bishops were, by right, Presidents of the Estates of Béarn; and its possessions, counted in monasteries, seminaries, and convents, were not less considerable than the more worldly riches of Pau.

Scarcely four miles from that brilliant capital the accommodation trains stop at a little station in the valley, and alighting there, the traveller began, over country roads, through the streets of the lower town, and then up a quiet hillside, to seek the Cathedral of Lescar. He wandered about the lanes and by-ways, past the tower of the Bishops' ruined Palace, past an hotel—a farm-house where agriculture was more pressing than the trade of visitors,—past a few small shops, and houses with bowed shutters. The stillness of the noon-day lay over the land, and listening to the soli-

tary sound of his own footsteps, the traveller felt as if he were in some place deserted not only by former greatness, but by every living soul. At last he came to the top of the hill and the object of his search stood before him.



"THE TOWER OF THE BISHOPS' RUINED PALACE."—LESCAR.

In all architecture is there scarcely a sorrier spectacle than that flat, bare façade of the XVII century, unless it be the side-walls of the church, the broad and wearying

expanse of slated-roofs, or the little wooden belfry which surmounts the whole and in spite of its crosses looks like a chicken-coop. Even at the apse's end there was nothing different except the barrenness of a high fence-wall. The church seemed beneath mediocrity, almost beneath contempt. Prowling disconsolately about the wall, the traveller discovered a little gate in the fence and ven-



THE PRESBYTERY.— LESCAR.

tured in, and there, from among the wooden crosses and the waving cypress-trees of the graveyard, he saw the three familiar apses of the ancient Romanesque, a tiny one on either side of the big one which was fat and round, with the rotundity and the jolly churchliness of a kindly, fat old monk. And the spirit of the traveller was refreshed, his



"THE VISTAS OF ARCADED OPENINGS."—LESCAR.

courage rose, he retraced his steps and entered the first portal.

In spite of the knowledge that the Cathedrals of the South are often more beautiful within than without, in spite of many past surprises and most pleasant disappointments, the traveller stood at the entrance of this nave spellbound and delighted. The stone of the interior is yellow, mellow and rich, and over it, through beautiful round windows in the side-aisles, the light was shining gloriously. The whole church was suffused with glowing warmth. Yet there was not the glare which is too often the antithesis of darkness. He saw the rounded fulness of the arches, the fine and beautiful moderation of the architectural decorations, and yet where they existed, the deep-cut richness of the carvings. The round tunnel-vaulting of the roof, a little flattened, the lower arches of the nave, those of the side-aisles lower still, and the archways between the chapels of the nave, form a series of great curves, one following the other in a long perspective, with vistas of arcaded openings. The arches rise from heavy, rectangular piers, which with the squat pillars that are grouped about them, have bases, sometimes plain, sometimes carved or moulded, resting on large drums. The capitals of the round pillars are rich in carvings, grotesques, faces, and animals; and above the open arches, is a narrow, deep-cut stringcourse. The windows of the church are round-headed, and those of the side-aisles, with their traceries, are most beautifully formed. As all the arching of the nave and all the pillars are reproduced in smaller form in the side-aisles, so they reappear in all the windows

and over all the lower archways and in all the smaller capitals; and above every tiny column of the windows, the same decoration recurs in infinite variety of detail. The entire church has the charm of a comprehensive unity, and as a tree is one great whole in all its twigs and leaves and delicate veinings, so here one sees, in all the church's parts, the beautiful unfolding, the complete evolution of a master's thought.

The furnishings of Notre-Dame are either good or very bad. As there are no nave chapels, the beloved Saints and Patrons of Lescar are invoked at altars, pitiably gaudy and highly coloured, placed along the walls of the side-aisles, and if the interior were not so large, they would be as obtrusive as they are hideous. The High Altar is of more modern, more intelligent taste, and in the choir-arching is an interesting fresco, the coronation of the Virgin. In front of the altar and in the transepts, are the church's treasures, the lectern, the Canons' stalls, and the Bishop's throne. The figures of Christ, the Virgin, Saint Michael, the Saints, and the Evangelists are effective, but rather coarsely large, and the smaller details show a greater delicacy of execution than of conception; and only the lectern with its wise and ancient eagle can endure the test of old carving, which, like old lace, to be truly beautiful must be truly fine.

The whole beauty of the church lies within the walls. It is not akin to the dark and single rooms of the Provençal Romanesque nor to the sombre Elne of Rousillon, it is the antithesis of the high and slender Arles, of Saint-Trophime's



"THE WISE AND ANCIENT EAGLE."—LESCAR.

subdued light and magnificent severity. In largeness and breadth of space with purity of style, it is almost unique. It has a beauty and a symmetry of massiveness which seem the perfection of the heavy, and if no exterior seems more dreary or more barren, no Romanesque interior is more impressive than this one, large, low, and broad.

Oloron.

In the south-western corner of the country, which touches Spain, as far from the centre of the modern world as it was from the great towns of the Middle Ages, lived one of the smallest of independent peoples, the Béarnais. Their head, the Viscount, had an hereditary title, but it was only after he had sworn to respect the liberties of his subjects and to govern them with the aid of the "cour maïour," that he was allowed to rule; and among the oldest written documents of the Romance language is the "fors d'Oloron," which with other charters, made the inhabitants of Béarn a free people. Their Viscounty was a constitutional state, which during all the Middle Ages "was the best governed, the freest and the most contented in all France and probably in Europe." Even Louis XI, the most skilful of land-grabbing monarchs, recognised the independence of the little country; and entering Béarn on one of his many pious pilgrimages to Our Lady—this time the Lady of Sarrance—he ordered the sword of France to be sheathed, "because he was no longer in his kingdom."

One of the most ancient cities of this land of Henry IV is Oloron, which lies, quiet and sleepy, near the Spanish

frontier; a town of old families and conservatisms; and from the troublous times of Jeanne d'Albret, a faithful centre of Catholicism.

During the Middle Ages, the jurisdiction of Oloron was strictly divided. Sainte-Croix was the town of the feudal lords; Sainte-Marie the city of the Bishops; and here, near



A HILLY STREET.— OLORON.

the episcopal Palace, was the Cathedral-church of the diocese. Re-built in the XI century, its west portal was added in the XII, its west tower in the XIII, its choir in the XIV, and the long line of nave chapels in the two following centuries. This long period of five hundred years of continuous construction has resulted in traces of five hundred years



"THE ROUNDED ROMANESQUE PORTAL OF THE XII CENTURY."—OLORON.

of changing styles. In the XVII century some further changes were made and the apse towers were destroyed; and to-day completed, the church is a large building, long, low, and heavy.

A square tower projects beyond the façade wall, and ends in a peaked point like those which cover the chapels of the apse and the higher dome. From the outer walls of the nave flying-buttresses—so solid, so low, that the name seems a misnomer—spring without grace, and fall heavily on the chapel roofs. The apse, with its slender Gothic windows and many buttresses, rises to a more effective height; and the little pointed gables of its chapels, like the house-roofs of the country, cluster picturesquely about the high peaks of the dome.

In the shadows underneath the Gothic arches of the tower-wall, is the most curious detail of the Cathedral, the rounded Romanesque portal of the XII century. The line of this fine arch is repeated again and again in receding curves and in the smaller arches of the tympanum. Like the subjects of its sculptures, it is unique, yet perfectly simple; and there is far more grace in the proportions of its whole than in its sculptured details. Two winged lions and two crouching lions attend the personages of the lower parts of the tympanum and above, Christ crucified is the principal theme. Still higher are the twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse, crowned like Kings, but bearing frivolous mandolins or unregal banjos; and in their midst is the Lamb of God. The modern pier which divides the door-way is of stone, and replaces the ancient marble one. It rests on two grotesque caryatides, and

all the carvings, very much worn, are equally unusual in subject and in treatment.

Leaving these strange old fancies of mediæval sculpture, one enters a sombre interior of exceeding breadth. Here at the entrance, under the low arching of the nave, the lines of the dome above the choir are invisible; and it is only by the diffusion of a soft light which seems to come from some unseen height that the dome can be imagined. Long Gothic windows in the choir also help to dispel the darkness, but on the blue fresco of the ambulatory wall their rays are quickly swallowed up. Although the central nave is higher than the side-aisles, and they in turn are higher than their chapels, there is no real loftiness; and the dark shadows of the vaulting, pressing closely over one's head, seem to chase away the light of day. This is, however, not the Spanish type, the damp and gloomy room with hidden chapels, but a church with aisles, and round and clustered columns, with short vistas, and the sudden break of light and shadow which great pillars give. Yet it has partaken of the local architectural idiosyncrasies, the local charm, and if the interior is rather northern in the conception of its general form, it is truly southern in its atmosphere. After the sun outside, cheerful and gay like the wit of the Midi, the interior has the darkness, the intense quiet, in which lies the suggestion of true Spanish mysticism. The way to the church is long and somewhat steep, it stands in the stillness of an ancient suburb, far even from the gentle bustle of the lower town; and once within its walls, it is not difficult to realise that the ardent soul could dream the dreams and see the visions that

mark the traditions of the churches in the border-land between France and Spain.

Bayonne. The traveller was sitting near one of the great pillars of the nave when these English words, spoken in a stage-whisper, fell on his ear:

"It is strange to see anyone—even a Catholic—in such deep meditation."

"Poor fellow! He must be performing a penance,—expiating some great sin perhaps."

The traveller tried to continue his sinful and meditative look, and the voices soon began again.

"This is glorious architecture, I feel at last as if I were in a Cathedral. Toulouse was out of joint, and Nîmes was positively ugly."

"And even Arles," added another voice, "was far too small, and to my mind the interior was insignificant."

"As for Béziers,—" The traveller never heard the particular fault of Béziers, for the ladies moved away and left the sinner to his thoughts, which, had they but known it, were something of the same complexion as their own. The subject-matter, at least, was identical. He had been thinking that this was one of the most conventional Cathedrals of all Gascony, and that it must please the well-ordered mind, not only by its beautiful grandeur, but by its conformity to the orthodox ideal. For to the well-ordered mind, a church may be small—"a little treasure,"— a "gem" of architecture, but the first requisite of a Cathedral is size and majesty. This conforms to an idea preconceived in the minds of the trav-

ellers who have first known the North, or the great popular Cathedrals of Milan and Cologne. It is an ideal rudely shattered in the South. Here a Cathedral is not, as it is almost invariably in the well known Gothic of the North, the biggest building of the country round; here it assumes its normal place in historic and ecclesiastical architecture: it is the Bishop's church, sometimes small and sometimes large. Sometimes vastly greater than the Bishop's castle, as at Albi, it is sometimes meaner than any one of a line of selfish prelates' Palaces; and in the most striking historic example in France, the papal residence at Avignon, the House of God is not a fourth as large nor half so grand as the Palace of His earthly Vicar. For in spite of its great gilt statue and its scores of steps, that church, which saw the Coronation of seven Popes, is one of the most modest in all the land. However revolutionary the idea, it is more logical to begin Cathedral study in the South, where there are so many styles and degrees of glory that a fixed notion or constant ideal is impossible; where Cathedrals are as various as the ecclesiastics who governed them, where the architecture is often so mediocre that there is time for the consideration of other interests,—of a Cathedral's place in the history of the Church and the life of the people and its treasure of anecdote and story.

To the continental tourist, the Cathedral of Bayonne will come as a relief. He has no time for idle fancies nor thoughts of dramas long cold and dead; he has to do with the things of the present. Bayonne presents none of the tantalising and inferior originalities that mar the fineness of Bazas, nor



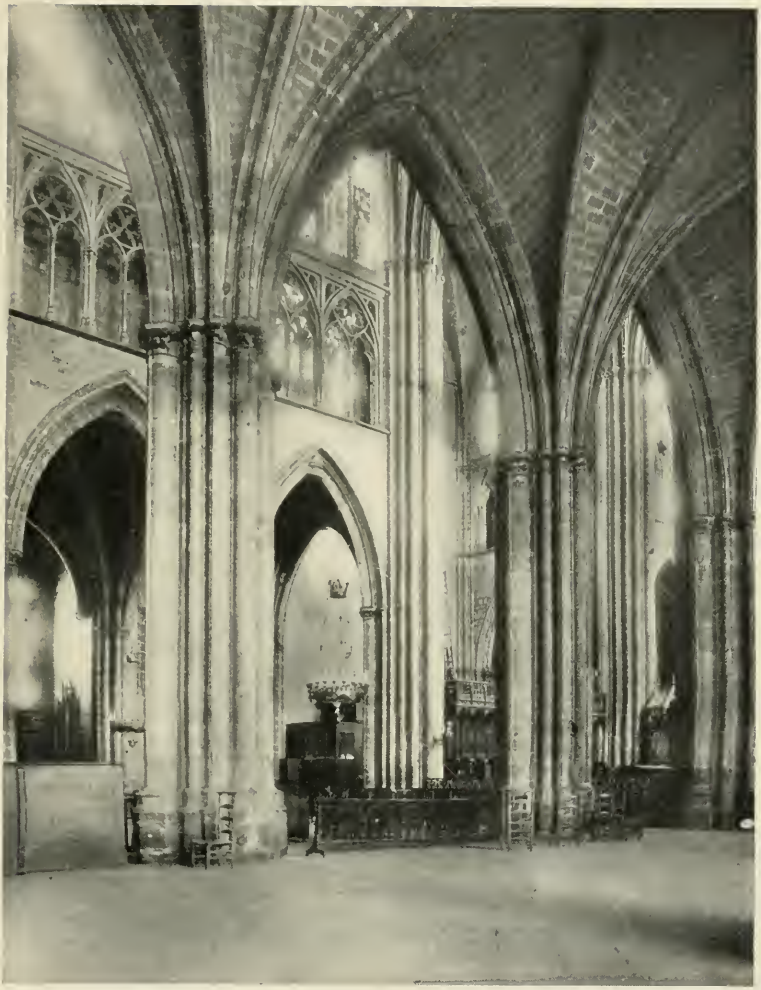
THE GREAT NAVE.—BAYONNE.

is it so surprisingly unique as Rodez, it is not half finished as is Narbonne, not is it as original as Albi, nor two-styled as Carcassonne. Here in this old city of Basque manners and Spanish memories, where Alva urged Catherine de Médicis to an immediate massacre of the Huguenots, where Napoleon cozened Charles IV out of the throne of Spain, here on the very Spanish border-land, was realised the most perfect southern achievement of a purely northern concept, an ideal native to the far-distant Isle-de-France. "Our old Cathedrals," says Renan, "are counted among the most beautiful things in the world; one can scarcely enter them without being in some sort inebriated with the infinite;" and at Bayonne, so lofty, so holy a spirit seems to pervade the great churchly body that many moments pass before one cares to coldly analyse the purely architectural details of which it is composed. The general form of the church is a Latin Cross, whose arms—the transepts—project very slightly. The naves have seven bays; on one side, a regular succession of chapels, and on the other, chapels which are an enclosed part of the north side of the Cloister. Perhaps, at one time—the southern style creeping in—all the walls were painted after the style of the baptismal chapel, where there is a fresco, the Crucifixion, which belongs to the period of transition before the Renaissance. But these paintings have disappeared, and except an isolated bit of colouring in which there is both dull, rich painting and gilding, the effect of the interior is as chaste as that of the coldest northern church.

The Cathedral's stained glass is of very varied kind. Many

old windows have disappeared, and as late as the XVIII century some panes were removed and replaced with pure white glass by Canons who wanted to see the pages of their breviary more clearly. The modern glass is of unbecoming mediocrity. In the twelve high windows of the central nave, however, there still remains glass of 1575. The quaint treatment of its numberless subjects, the details, the colourings, deserve more than one quiet hour and give to the Cathedral its most distinguished ornamentation. Other details of the church are less beautiful. The crypt which extends under part of the apse is little, low, and comparatively insignificant; and in comparison with those of Cathedrals as great, the stalls of Bayonne show not only a poverty of art, but little character. The ambulatory has also its chapels, but it is above all the beautiful height and boldness of the central nave which holds the traveller spellbound. Clustered columns support the tall, pointed arches, and engaged columns rise long and straight, and then seem to arch until they meet across the height of the vault. Above the graceful arches of the triforium are the large clerestory windows, not less delicately designed. So fine is the conception of every detail that the eye is ravished by the proportions of this large interior, not by any ornamental design nor even by any fine structural detail so much as by the beautiful harmony of the nave whose every line is correct and pure.

In spite of the absolutism of northern tradition, the subtle influence of the surrounding South has touched the Cathedral; and like almost every church below the Loire, its exterior is far less beautiful than the interior both in unity and



"CLUSTERED COLUMNS SUPPORT THE TALL, POINTED ARCHES."—
BAYONNE.

majesty. It would seem as if less loving effort, less care for harmony, were expended on the outer work than in the room where, by even the least devout of the Cathedral-builders, God was believed to dwell in Very Person. On the outer walls the different epochs of construction appear more marked, and there is a heaviness and an irregularity that is unfortunate in a building so magnificently planned. The problem of the site, the uneven lay of ground, was cleverly met; and although one must go up nine steps to reach the entrance of the north transept, and descend almost as many in entering by the nave portal, there is no awkward line or bend in the general construction. Neither of the portals add dignity to the Cathedral. That of the north transept is double, that of the nave is preceded by a porch. Both are large, and both seem heavy and of laboured inspiration. But in the great Revolution they were completely denuded of all their sculptures, which tradition says were legion, and sculpture is so essential a part of a Gothic portal, that they can be no better judged to-day than the true figure of a man from his skeleton. One beautiful bit of detail which was spared is a knocker on the north door. It hangs from the teeth of a monstrous creature, whose head alone appears, and is a ring of bronze carved with Plantagenet leopards and charming arabesques. It is impossible to know whether this was merely an ornament or whether it might have been one of those rings which gave to the pursued criminal who succeeded in clutching it, the rights of sanctuary. But historical hypothesis aside, it is a curious work; and in his Architectural Dictionary, Viollet-le-Duc mentions only two others that ar-

similar, one at Le Puy-en-Velay, the other of the XIII century in the Cathedral of Noyon.

The least important portal however, which now leads from the church to the modern sacristy, and led in happier days to the open Cloister, vividly portrays the artistic ideal of the builders of Bayonne and enables one to judge fairly their creative power. All its sculptures are believed to have been painted and gilded, but they are now in all the perfection of their uncoloured stone. There is the Virgin as Queen of Angels, and Christ as Judge, with the goodly company who, in the tradition of the art, always accompanied Him. The preservation of the door was doubtless fortuitous, and its wealth of carving, even when compared to much of the great northern achievement, is most beautiful,—a pregnant suggestion of what the two greater doorways may have been.

The Cathedral is unfortunately so hemmed about by houses that glimpses of its walls are rare and a real perspective is impossible. From Vauban's fortifications there is an admirable, tantalising view of the spires and big flying-buttresses, a view in miniature. But as if to compensate for its general concealment, the two towers loom insistently with charming gracefulness. Across the river, across the old earthworks, on the way to Biarritz, on the way to Spain, they overtop all Bayonne, and as long as she can be seen, these fine needles stand out against the blue of the southern sky; but they never look so graceful as when they appear at the end of some small street which leads to the church itself; they then become near enough to be real, not pointing fairy fingers as spires often seem; and their white slenderness

has an appropriate setting in the lower houses of the city's narrow ways. One tower was partially built in the early days of the Cathedral, the other in the latter part of the XIX century, when the beautiful spires were added to complete the whole; and in order to suggest the two principal architectural periods of the edifice, one reproduces the manner of the XIV, the other that of the XV century.



"THE SPIRES."—BAYONNE.

The most beautiful of the outer portions of the Cathedral, and one of the most unique and charming of France, is the Gothic Cloister of the XIII and XIV centuries. Although it has suffered much from the vagaries of restorers, it has preserved the atmosphere of the olden times. Instead of being a mere deserted show-place or a wayworn thoroughfare, it is still used by the clergy,

for whom it was designed. The courtesy of the Cloister is always extended to visitors, but tourists are not unpleasantly numerous, and those who roam about the quaint old streets of this Catholic stronghold and come upon the grilled gate, may catch glimpses of a solitary priest reading his breviary as he slowly walks about, or see small groups of priests and students of the seminaries; or, during the High Mass, find it deserted, with rows of broad-brimmed hats hung upon its walls. Within it is very spacious, unusually broad and large, and, for a Cloister, almost vast. Two sides face the street, and have open arches not only toward the close but in the outer wall. The columns of these arches are slim and clustered, with small capitals, and the whole effect is that of a series of exquisitely light Gothic windows with delicate traceries. The openness of the arches allows a flood of sunshine to pour into the walks; and this sunny airiness, with the admirable grace of the general conception, makes it an unique structure in the South.

In 1870, a so-called restoration took place in which the north walk was incorporated into the church proper and became the sacristy of the parish chapel. This wanton act of transformation was worthy of earlier Vandals, and has seriously disturbed, although it could not destroy the Cloister's large and beautiful symmetry. Time, as well as architects and churchmen of unhistoric mind, have removed many of its most important details, until now little except the general architectural form has been preserved. In these lost details the story of the Cloister's many uses was well told. The close, now merely a pretty expanse of grass, as well as

the walls and the vaults beneath the paving, were burial places of those citizens of Bayonne who had no other chosen, consecrated spot in churches or in Convent-chapels, and in the middle of the little cemetery, was a large stone Cross shaded by two elms. The walk was also a place of judgment, and on two stone seats which used to be at the bases of two pillars, reverend members of the Chapter sat to hear cases and pronounce judgment. A scaffold and a carcan stood in the close, but they were unchurchly relics, and in the XVIII century they silently disappeared. Besides these graver uses, the Cloister was the assembling place of artisans and guildsmen, and here they elected their syndics and representatives. In the old registers, the minutes nearly always begin, "At a meeting held in the Cloister of the Cathedral, under the elm, . . . " and this small sentence brings before the mind scenes of a picturesque, excited Midi, when the walks were filled with bands of busy laymen and the Church took part in every act of life.

Besides the great divisions of the Cathedral which no one could fail to see on entering, there are the smaller rooms, often very beautifully built, that are hidden in the walls,— the old prebendary sacristy, the treasury, the vesting-room of the Canons, the capitulary hall, the choir-boys' training-school, and formerly, above the galleries, there were apartments for the Canons, school-rooms, and lodgings for the many who daily served in the church. All the old rooms which remain are vastly curious and interesting to those who care to understand the busy, complicated life which goes on each day in a Cathedral.

That Sainte-Marie of Bayonne should be so notable an example of a northern style, is largely due to the Anglo-Norman occupation. Until the XII century, the city itself was much inferior to other cities of Béarn, to Oloron, and to Lescar. In 1120, one of the greatest of her Bishops, Raymond de Martres, obtained from William the Troubadour, Count of Poitiers and Duke of Aquitaine and ancestor of the far-famed Eleanor, a liberal civic charter. It was this great prelate who conceived the idea of a new and greater Sainte-Marie; but before the actual work began, he died, and the first stone was placed in 1141 by his successor, Arnaud-Loup de Bessabet. This edifice was burned; its re-building was begun; and less than twenty-five years later—a mere day in the construction of a Cathedral—the city passed under northern rule, by the marriage of Eleanor of Guienne to Henry Plantagenet; and during the three most crucial centuries of the church's re-building, northern influences predominated and the Plantagenet leopards were carved on the new edifice. Bayonne, as well as its church, grew prosperously under the liberal dominion of its new rulers, and when, in 1458, Charles VII and Dunois regained the city, the Cathedral was essentially finished. After 1451, the detail work was almost abandoned, and the succeeding centuries brought little except wear and devastation. In the XIX century, a patriotic citizen of Bayonne, grieved by the decay and incompleteness which marred the glory of the church, directed in his will that the sum of thirty-five thousand francs should be paid annually from his estate for its preservation. In the work of restoration, this goodly sum counts but little; in

actual building, even less. But it means the beginning of better things; and if other Bayonnais are as generous as Monsieur Lormand, it may be hoped that some of our generation may see the great sculptures replaced in the portals, the hierarchy of heaven again in their niches, the apse windows restored, the façade porch finished in the dignity of its original design, and the north side restored to the Cloister. Then, even if half-hidden by little houses, Sainte-Marie would more fully justify the noble ambitions of her great mediæval creators, her history, and her noble interior.

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